

effective
practices
series

Case Management for Supervisors

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Federal Judicial Center
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This guide is a compilation of practices that supervisors and other managers consider effective and of possible interest to other districts. Participants at a Federal Judicial Center symposium selected which practices to include in this publication. The individual descriptions were prepared by the officers who use them. This Federal Judicial Center publication was undertaken in furtherance of the Center's statutory mission to develop and conduct education programs for judicial branch employees. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Federal Judicial Center.

This document has been repaginated to allow for more efficient two-sided printing after download from the J-Net. No text has been changed since the original was prepared and distributed in 1997. Only the page numbering has changed.

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The Center's Federal Judicial History Office develops programs relating to the history of the judicial branch and assists courts with their own judicial history programs.

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Acknowledgments

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Eastern District of Kentucky

Although not in attendance, Shelia Jacoby, chief U.S. pretrial services officer for the Southern District of Alabama, and Harold Wooten, chief of the Federal Corrections and Supervision Division, Programs Services Branch, both assisted the committee in its work.

The Center would also like to thank Susan Rodolf, supervising U.S. probation officer for the Western District of Texas, for her contributions to this publication.

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Introduction

In September 1995 the Federal Judicial Center convened an advisory group to discuss the needs of managers, particularly those who supervise other probation and pretrial services officers. The group identified ongoing training for supervisors in case management as one of their most critical needs.

The probation or pretrial services supervisor guides line officers who collectively supervise hundreds of offenders and defendants. By the very nature of their jobs, line officers exercise a great deal of power over the individuals they supervise, and their actions can have far-reaching effects—negative and positive—on the community as well as on defendants and offenders. Consequently, supervisors must understand good case management practices and be able to ensure that their officers are acting ethically and responsibly and according to the tenets of enhanced supervision and pretrial services supervision.

As a result of its discussions with the advisory group, the Center determined that supervisors' needs would best be met conceptually and practically with two different but related publications. *The Supervisor's Roles in Case Management* clarifies the supervisor's multiple roles and provides ideas on how he or she can meet the supervisory challenges related to case management. The purpose of this publication, *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors*, is to provide a means for supervisors and managers system-wide to "trade notes" on practices they have found effective in supervising line officers. Both projects were supported by the Chiefs Advisory Council, its Supervision and its Training and Education committees, and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO).

Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors is the third publication in the Center's Effective Practices series. As with the first two, *Effective Practices in Enhanced Supervision* and *Effective Practices: Pretrial Services Communications*, the Center recognizes that not all of the ideas presented here will work in every district. The intent is to provide as wide a range of practices as possible, from which supervisors can choose the ones appropriate to their needs. The practices presented here essentially represent supervisors talking to their peers.

Identifying Issues

The Center formed a planning committee for this publication in March 1996 to identify supervisory issues specific to case management, decide how to gather practices, establish criteria for judging practices' effectiveness, and begin planning a symposium for reviewing practices and selecting the ones that would be published.

Consulting the Administrative Office's Monograph 109, *Supervision of Federal Offenders*, and Publication 111, *United States Pretrial Services Supervision*, the committee came up with four general categories of supervisory activities essential to case management:

- staff and team development

- case file audits
- quality assurance
- consultation

The committee then identified specific questions in each category, concentrating on issues applicable to all supervisors, whether their officers supervised defendants or offenders, but recognizing that many of the answers would be specific either to pretrial services or probation. The questions are listed in appendix A.

Following the planning committee's recommendations, the Center sent a memorandum to all probation and pretrial services chiefs requesting that they share information about case management practices, strategies, programs, or procedures that their supervisors had found to be effective. A form for recording the information was enclosed, along with examples of effective practices. The Center asked that all practices meet criteria established by the committee—specifically, that practices

- relate to supervision of officers who supervise defendants or offenders;
- include a clear rationale statement;
- require only resources currently available in the district (i.e., that practices not be hypothetical—possible only if the district had more staff, money, equipment, etc.);
- adhere to national policies and procedures and to the tenets of the supervision monographs for probation and pretrial services;
- have a potentially wide application and not just address district-specific issues or problems or isolated events; and
- produce observable results.

Copies of the instructions for submitting practices can be found in appendix B.

Over 700 practices were submitted by chiefs, deputies, supervisors, officers-in-charge, and team leaders. Two themes run through submissions. The first is that communication and feedback—written and verbal, individual and group—are essential to supervision. The second is that the supervisor's time is his or her greatest resource.

Reviewing Practices

In June 1996 the Center convened the *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors* symposium in Baltimore, Maryland, to review the practices submitted by the districts and select for publication those that fit the criteria set forth by the committee.

The committee carefully considered selection of symposium participants and agreed that members of the Chiefs Advisory Council and the appropriate committees (Supervision, Training and Education) should be represented by their supervisors. The committee also agreed that all participants should have demonstrated a commitment to the system, shown an

interest in making the system better, and indicated that they possess the ability to see beyond the boundaries of their offices to the needs of the system as a whole. For these reasons, graduates of the Center's Leadership Development Program and supervisors who had participated in team reviews with AO staff were invited to participate. A list of symposium participants can be found in appendix C.

Key Concepts and Core Values

Effective case management practices cannot exist in a vacuum. No matter how dedicated they are, officers need an environment that allows them to perform at their highest level. During the *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors* symposium in June 1996, the Center asked participants to identify the key concepts and core values they felt should exist in every office. Their responses, which dealt with all levels of the organization, outside resources, personal qualities, and specific skills, fell into three broad categories: organizational culture, resources and support, and personal values. Responses are encapsulated below. Review these lists with other managers and line staff. What other qualities, skills, or resources would you add? What is missing in your organization? Start a dialogue. Set goals and priorities. Create a plan. And, using this publication for ideas, start working towards making your organization what you want it to be.

Organizational culture: excellent communication between probation and pretrial services and the court, self-directed staff, teamwork, good leadership at all levels, recognition and rewards for good work, balanced priorities, belief that staff can make a difference, appreciation of diversity, shared vision and a clear mission, safe work environment, efforts to help victims, strategic planning, internal and external review processes, proactive rather than reactive management style, responsible hiring practices, absence of "sacred cows," objective and measurable evaluation processes, shared responsibility and accountability.

Resources and support: support of the court, state-of-the-art equipment, good administrative support, ongoing training, well-stocked library, room for professional growth for all staff, good community relations and community resources, adequate funding, effective use of automation and technology, adequate staffing, cooperation of stakeholders, effective use of staff's talents.

Personal values and qualities: integrity, commitment, energy, concern for others, consistency, pride, trust, discretion, positive attitude, dissatisfaction with the status quo, common sense, flexibility, sense of humor, reliability, intelligence, creativity, initiative, fairness.

Working in small groups, symposium participants reviewed each practice against the criteria for publication. Practices that one group found did not meet all the criteria were reviewed by another group. Practices that a group found particularly useful or innovative were displayed for all to review. Participants discussed ways to implement different practices and came up with new practices inspired by those they had reviewed. Participants thought it best to publish short descriptions of a fairly large number of practices, even modest ones, to provide as extensive and varied a “menu” as possible for supervisors all over the country. In all, over 100 practices were selected for publication.

Using This Publication

As a result of the committee’s careful planning, the enthusiastic response from the field, and symposium participants’ willingness to consider diverse perspectives, *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors* has literally “something for everyone.” No matter what your current performance level, you should be able to find at least one practice that, alone or in combination with current practices, will improve your—and your officers’—performance.

The publication is divided into four sections containing practices directed at staff and team development, case file audits, quality assurance, and consultation. Practices were edited to ensure clarity and consistency. They contain the minimum amount of information you need to decide if they are appropriate for your situation. Some practices are self-explanatory. Others may require follow-up. The names of contacts are provided, should you want to obtain written material cited in a practice or to request further information.

Districts that submitted practices similar to the published ones but not included because of space considerations are cited after the contact. Note that these unpublished practices were judged to be *similar*, not identical, to the published ones. If a practice interests you, contact the referenced districts for additional information and copies of forms, policies, or checklists.

The Center recommends that you take the following steps to make the most of the practices:

- Review *The Supervisor’s Roles in Case Management*.
- Review the key concepts and core values that follow.
- Working with your deputy and fellow supervisors, identify areas that need to be improved or changed.
- Review the practices collected here and select those that have the greatest potential, whether used as is, in combination, or as inspiration for new practices of your own.
- Discuss potential changes with your staff. Listen to their reactions or concerns and adjust your plans accordingly.
- Monitor new practices and evaluate change. If a practice does not have the desired result, try another.
- Repeat the process.

In summary, keep trying! Your job is critical to the successful supervision of defendants and offenders in your community.

Staff and Team Development

Mentoring New Officers

Practice

We have a structured new officer orientation program which begins with 30 days of introduction to office policies and procedures. A mentor is assigned to work closely with the officer for up to one year under the direct guidance of the SUSPO.

Rationale

To make initial training of new officers comprehensive.

Benefits

Officers learn the job more quickly, in a logical, organized fashion. The mentoring system makes the learning practical and realistic. The mentor and new officer form a lasting, positive relationship.

Challenges

Scheduling time for training puts an additional burden on both the mentor and the SUSPO. Developing a mentor with the necessary attributes to train a new officer effectively is also challenging.

Resources

Appropriate training requires significant amounts of both the mentor's and the SUSPO's time.

Contact

Dennis R. Smith
District of Minnesota

District-wide Training

Practice

All officers in our district undergo intensive supervision training, which exposes them to varied situations and the appropriate strategies for recognizing, prioritizing, and managing supervision issues. The training is district-wide and is tailored for new officers. Veteran officers desiring a refresher can also benefit.

Rationale

To provide officers with a knowledge base for handling supervision issues. To ensure that supervision techniques are consistent among officers.

Benefits

Officers understand their authority and know district-wide supervision practices.

Challenges

Coordinating schedules for participants and trainees.

Resources

Experienced staff conduct the training.

Contact

Ralph D. Pacy, Michael J. Meczkowski, and Susan I. Smith
Eastern District of Virginia

(Similar practices were submitted by Dennis R. Bates, Middle District of Tennessee; Trudy McClintock, Southern District of California; and Craig Valashek, Western District of Texas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Orientation Team

Practice

We establish an orientation team consisting of the SUSPO, an experienced officer, and the new USPO. Team members work together in transferring supervision of cases. The team discusses policy and procedures and approaches to dealing with specific offenders.

Rationale

To take advantage of experienced staff in guiding and orienting new employees. To more completely orient each USPO to current supervision strategies, using a “hands-on” approach.

Benefits

The experienced officer becomes a mentor for the new USPO. The new officer learns more quickly from firsthand contact with supervision strategies implemented in the field.

Challenges

The process takes a great deal of the experienced officer’s time. Care must be taken to select an appropriate mentor.

Resources

This approach requires the equivalent of one to two days per week of the experienced officer’s time during the first part of the orientation period. Less time is required from the SUSPO.

Contact

John H. Stites
Southern District of Iowa

(A similar practice was submitted by Dennis R. Smith, District of Minnesota. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Identifying Appropriate Risks

Practice

We begin developing supervision strategies during the client investigation and interview. Officers receive formal training in critical thinking in report writing and other areas. We also use supervisory audits and case staffings to help officers identify problems and make appropriate recommendations using the least restrictive conditions available. This approach leads to supervision strategies that adequately address the concerns of the client and community.

Rationale

Officers were not identifying the risks associated with particular clients, and the court often imposed “blanket” conditions. The most important concerns were not emphasized, and supervision was ineffective.

Benefits

As a result of using critical thinking, officers recommend conditions appropriate to the risks of nonappearance and danger, and they develop strategies to address areas needing attention.

Challenges

Officers were not used to noting conditions addressing the risks of nonappearance or danger. Before implementation of the supervision publication, they were not developing supervision strategies at all.

Resources

Training in critical thinking in report writing and in using the supervision publication. Time, for conducting file audits of the Initial Case Supervision Plan and Supervision Progress Review.

Contact

Craig Valashek
Western District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Thomas J. Wolf, Eastern District of Pennsylvania; Ronald Kline, Western District of Missouri; and Denise Dohanec and Patricia Arellano, District of Arizona. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Intensive Training

Practice

I require every new officer to review Monograph 109 and relevant statutes. We cover each issue in one-on-one training, then I present the officer with a relatively simple, small initial caseload. I travel in the field with all new officers and give them feedback on their contacts with clients. I also stress the importance of prioritizing issues based on need and time. Our district also employs a mentor system using senior staff.

Rationale

Because our caseloads are large, getting new officers up to speed as soon as possible is imperative.

Benefits

With our intensive training regiment, new officers in most cases can be up to full performance in six to twelve months.

Challenges

Because there is a lot of change on our staff, I feel that I am constantly training new officers. Either by circumstance or design, officers transfer once they are trained.

Resources

Monograph 109 and veteran officers. New officer orientation at the training academy.

Contact

L. Thomas Langley, Jr.
Eastern District of North Carolina

(Similar practices were submitted by Aletha Gardner, Eastern District of Michigan; Randall Biehl, Western District of New York; David Schoeck, Southern District of Ohio; J. Ray Young, Northern District of Florida; Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama; and Raul Tovar, Southern District of Texas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Consistent Approaches to Supervising Substance Abusers

Practice

Under the direction of the SUSPO, the entire aftercare team, including drug and mental health officers, meets one day a week to discuss sanctions for therapy schedule violations, positive drug tests, and stalls.

Rationale

The drug team officers were not always comfortable with or knowledgeable about all the sanctions available. Offenders were therefore being treated differently by different officers.

Benefits

This team meeting has led to a more consistent approach to therapy. It is an excellent way for senior officers and management to pass along district policies and procedures.

Challenges

An ongoing problem is convincing some of the senior officers to participate in democratic staffing which may restrict some of their options.

Resources

Approximately two hours per week of staff time.

Contact

Thomas L. Densmore
Northern District of Texas

Case Staffing with the ISU

Practice

As needed, officers in the Phoenix Intensive Supervision Unit (ISU) present a case requiring immediate attention to the unit. The officers explicitly define the problem and the specific options for action they have in mind, clearly articulate the desired resolution, and suggest a realistic time frame for closure. The unit supervisor and officers staff the cases and participate in the agreed-upon supervision process.

After the initial case staffing meeting, the unit meets weekly to review and redefine actions and the steps taken to reach the desired resolutions.

For example, we recently had a problem with an offender on supervision for a firearms offense. The offender's history included documentation that he had firearms in his residence while on federal probation. The offender, therefore was deemed likely to have one or more guns. The desired resolution was to ensure that the offender did not possess any firearms. Some of the available options for action considered were conducting a thorough home inspection, investigating to determine if there was reasonable motive to conduct a search, and removing the offender from the residence and placing him in a halfway house. In the end, the unit decided to conduct a home inspection that involved the case officer, supervisor, and another unit officer. One firearm was discovered.

Rationale

The ISU is a pilot project consisting of just three officers and a supervisor. The caseloads are small (36 to 44 offenders) but high risk. The unit supervisor felt that this spin-off of the "Top Five" programs presented in the Federal Judicial Center's Effective Practices: Enhanced Supervision series would not only be an effective supervision technique but would help bring the unit together.

Benefits

To date, the practice has done exactly what was hoped, and more. The ISU supervisor and officers work as a team. Unit members also appear to be involved in supervising all ISU offenders, not just the ones on their respective caseloads.

Challenges

There is always the problem of finding time to get everyone together. Additionally, the officers at first thought the meetings were just case staffings or time to tell war stories. Therefore, they didn't come prepared. Most of this misunderstanding was attributable to lack of experience with

a teamwork approach. However, as the idea of clearly stating case problems, options for action, and desired resolutions evolved, the value of the concept became apparent.

Resources

Supervisor's and officers' time.

Contact

David C. Jones
District of Arizona

Unit Meetings and Case Staffings

Practice

Through frequent unit meetings and case staffings, officers are encouraged to review all available case file material to become thoroughly familiar with offenders. By also visiting frequently with offenders and with offenders' families and employers, officers are better able to help offenders set attainable goals. Additionally, having as much information as possible helps officers assess safety issues.

Rationale

To provide quality services to the courts and to offenders, officers must know as much as possible about the people they supervise. Knowing offenders well is important in identifying safety issues as well as establishing rapport with offenders and their families.

Benefits

In addition to being more safety conscious, officers are able to integrate community services that are available to offenders and their families.

Challenges

Some officers need to become more proactive in providing supervision services.

Resources

Daily to weekly staffings of the most difficult cases and discussion of alternatives are essential.

Contact

David G. Bazan
Southern District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Michael B. Chatman, Middle District of Florida; Dalia Villalpando, Southern District of Texas; Dan Gonzales, Southern District of California; William B. Beck, District of Maine; Bill Cazalas, Southern District of Texas; W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Open-Door Policy and Peer Consultation

Practice

Besides holding supervision sessions, I maintain an open-door policy to allow informal discussion of supervision issues. This approach appears to have worked well in our small office. I also encourage peer consultation.

Rationale

The size of the office and the fact that there was only one supervising officer led naturally to an open-door policy and peer consultation.

Benefits

Officers exercise better professional judgment and devise better supervision strategies.

Challenges

Because of the open-door policy, more than one officer may approach the supervisor at a time. The policy also encourages random meetings and perhaps some disorganization. The supervisor also experiences frequent interruptions.

Resources

Weekly staff meetings, unscheduled meetings with individual officers.

Contact

Héctor R. Torres-Quñones
District of Puerto Rico

(A similar practice was submitted by Michael Gillen, Western District of Michigan. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Accompanying Officers

Practice

As often as possible, but at least once a week, I accompany one of the officers in my unit to the field or court for modification or revocation proceedings.

Rationale

For too long in our system, supervisors were deskbound, engaged only in processing paper. By accompanying officers in their meaningful daily activities, I am able to observe what is taking place rather than hear about it after the fact or read about it in chronologicals.

Benefits

I feel more comfortable knowing what is going on with my officers' cases. By actually working the cases together, the officers and I are able to discuss problems, prioritize them, and develop strategies to address them.

Challenges

I have to adjust my schedule and keep up with my own work in order to spend time with the officers in the community. Some officers, particularly in the beginning, are threatened by having a supervisor ride with them. They feel that the supervisor is checking on them in a punitive or bureaucratic way. By working with them as a colleague, the supervisor can dispel this fear.

Resources

The only resource used is my time. We all struggle with time management, but this type of activity is well worth the time required because it helps ensure good work.

Contact

Thomas W. Collins
District of Nevada

(A similar practice was submitted by Gordon Okada, Northern District of Texas. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Quality Teams

Practice

We have formed supervision “quality teams” led by the SUSPO. Team members agree on key elements of case planning and implementation and staff problem cases.

Rationale

To make supervision services consistent from officer to officer. To provide a means for officers to share strategies, skills, and experience.

Benefits

Substantive officer agreement on supervision objectives and goals. Increased consistency from caseload to caseload. Decreased personal ownership of cases. Broadening of staff strategies.

Challenges

Forming teams was time consuming. Also, officers initially clashed over approaches to case supervision, and tension resulted.

Resources

Consultants’ fees for training and forming teams were significant. Forming teams also required expenditures of staff time.

Contact

Will O’Sullivan or Iris Winey
Northern District of California

(A similar practice was submitted by Darrel Gordon, Middle District of Florida. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Quick-Reference Checklists

Practice

I provide officers with quick-reference checklists for investigating self-employment, finances, etc. I review how the checklists apply to probation officers' specific cases and give feedback on case reviews as to how well officers followed checklist strategies.

Rationale

Manuals tend to collect dust. These checklists are easy to use; thus, officers turn to them more often.

Benefits

Officers now have a starting point for collecting information, even when they don't totally understand the material they're collecting.

Challenges

Using the checklist can be a bit mechanical; the real challenge is to teach officers how to analyze what they collect.

Resources

Preparing the checklists takes time and requires feedback from staff and SUSPOs.

Contact

Richard Janes
Southern District of Florida

(Note: See reverse for a sample of one checklist.)

Self-Employment Checklist

1. Nature of business: What does it do? Does business activity make sense? Can the business make money? Compare receipts and expenses.
2. How long in business? History of business with or without defendant; changes in location, operations, etc.
3. Partners: Percentage of ownership; duties, investment.
4. Develop specific duties of the defendant: Number of hours he or she works each week, location, travel, etc.
5. Location of business and description of physical plant: Field visit, key interviews.
6. Number and types of employees.
7. Names of customers and suppliers, if relevant.
8. How is business capitalized? From beginning to present; review balance sheet, current bank accounts, tax returns, checking account, etc.
9. Method of pay and amount: Does pay fluctuate?
10. Licenses needed: Occupational, city, and county licenses; special licenses; Department of Professional Regulation, state, and federal licenses, if applicable.
11. Is business regulated by the government? State, federal, etc.
12. Existing inventories: Where? How much? Value?
13. Method of advertising.
14. Develop corporate check.
15. Civil records: Judgments, liens, civil suits, bankruptcy, etc.
16. Risk to third parties, or is it risk-related employment?

For a sample financial checklist, please contact Richard Janes, Southern District of Florida.

Centralized Training on Principles and Core Beliefs

Practice

To ensure that officers from various field offices take the same approach to case supervision, all new officers and those transferring into the supervision unit attend centralized training on the principles of enhanced supervision and on the district's core beliefs.

Rationale

A professional approach to supervising offenders requires that the enforcement of conditions, in addition to other aspects of supervision, be consistent.

Benefits

Officers and supervisors know that the supervision files are the same in all district offices and that there is no lag time or "reeducation" of offenders whose cases are transferred to other offices.

Challenges

Getting staff members from all over the district to a central location at a time that is convenient to them can be difficult.

Resources

Experienced supervisors develop the case plans and conduct training. Significant time and planning are required, but the expenses for materials are minimal.

Contact

Patrick O. Culbertson
District of South Carolina

(Similar practices were submitted by Michael Meczowski, Eastern District of Virginia; Randall T. Biehl, Western District of New York; Bonita M. Wells, Eastern District of Virginia; Bernard Ray, Southern District of New York; and Dennis R. Bates, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Frequent Review of Enhanced Supervision

Practice

Our district follows the enhanced supervision model of case management. We frequently review the model during unit meetings and staffings and refer often to the monograph. Officers are thus able to make the monograph's tenets part of their personal vision.

Rationale

Embracing the enhanced supervision model enables officers to systematically monitor offenders and conduct surveillance. All contacts now have a purpose.

Benefits

Officers make more meaningful contacts than they had previously.

Challenges

Getting officers to change their old supervision practices.

Resources

Discussions of enhanced supervision.

Contact

Leonel R. Garza
Southern District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Paul Visokay, District of Connecticut; Héctor R. Torres-Quíñones, District of Puerto Rico; Leslie A. Cory, Eastern District of Tennessee; and G. Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Team Meetings

Practice

One or two days after our monthly leadership team meeting (attended by the chief, DCUSPOs, and SUSPOs), the SUSPOs meet with their officers to discuss the topics covered in the meeting. Later, we send the chief a brief noting topics not discussed in the leadership team meeting, as well as our team's suggestions or concerns.

Rationale

With these follow-up meetings, officers are better informed and more "in tune" with district policy. The memo allows officers to provide feedback to the SUSPOs, DCUSPOs, and chief.

Benefits

Improved morale, better communication, a feeling among officers that they are being heard by management, more continuity of purpose, and understanding by management of the contents of SUSPOs' team meetings.

Challenges

We have to be careful to encourage discussion rather than just "tell officers the latest news" from the leadership team. We must also develop officers' trust to the extent that they will speak candidly and freely.

Resources

One to two hours per meeting.

Contact

Van Smith
Northern District of Texas

(A similar practice was submitted by Dan Gonzalez, Southern District of California. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Continuity of Procedures

Practice

We implement our district's vision by having officers supervise the same defendants they write reports on. We periodically review general reports as well as violation reports to ensure that supervision methods are the least restrictive for defendants.

Rationale

By supervising the defendants on whom they wrote reports, officers are able to identify the least restrictive conditions for monitoring, and magistrates in turn set less restrictive conditions.

Benefits

The fewest number of conditions for monitoring defendants are chosen.

Challenges

For officers: achieving balance, remembering that case supervision is not intended to be punitive, and being creative in setting conditions, conducting better interviews and investigations, and recommending the most appropriate conditions.

Resources

Supervisor's time, for talking to officers.

Contact

Ronald E. Kline
Western District of Missouri

Case Scenarios

Practice

We give USPOs sample case scenarios for which they must solve certain supervision problems. We review and discuss their responses and provide the “correct” answers in writing.

Rationale

USPOs need to see how concepts can be translated into action.

Benefits

USPOs have a better understanding of how to apply supervision strategies.

Challenges

It is possible for case scenarios to be relied on too much. No two cases are the same; USPOs must be encouraged to think for themselves.

Resources

Time, for preparing scenarios.

Contact

Richard Janes
Southern District of Florida

(Note: See reverse for sample case scenarios. Additional scenarios are available on request from the district.)

Self-Employment Scenario

1. How would you investigate the following self-employed defendants if they were under your supervision? The first case is done for you to use as a guide, but keep in mind that there are various approaches that can be used, depending on the circumstances.

Case A: James Brown is a self-employed financial consultant who works out of his home. He does work for various family members, friends, and others by referral. He has been employed in this business for the past four years.

Guide: Determine whether Brown has any education, background, or work experience in the financial consulting field. Also, based on the defendant's prior involvement in related criminal activities, does this proposed employment pose risks? Review tax returns for the past four years and determine if this business has produced legitimate income. Does the defendant have the appropriate licenses? Make sure you know which ones are needed. Review the defendant's bank statements and checking account to determine how much business activity there is. You should ask which family members he works with and get the names of other customers to determine how large his customer base really is. Check with the state comptroller's office for negative information about the defendant's business reputation. You should also do a credit check. A search of civil records will show if there are any judgments, liens, or other information related to his business practices. Find out how many hours per week the defendant actually works and whether he claims full-time employment. The volume of business activity in this case will be a key factor in determining whether you allow the business to continue.

Case B: Ruth Martin is a new probation case, transferred from another district. She owes \$13,500 in restitution. She has a good background in nursing and could get a well-paying job easily enough. However, she proposes an elaborate self-employment scheme involving home health care. She claims she does not need to earn a salary right away since her husband makes very good money in his tire distribution business. However, he refuses to provide information concerning his business and personal finances. Martin claims she can only pay \$25 per week towards restitution until her self-employment idea materializes.

For additional case samples, contact Richard Janes, Southern District of Florida.

Linking Goals to the District's Vision

Practice

Our management team develops a vision statement that is presented to all staff and revised, if necessary. Each year all staff establish goals that embrace the mission statement. Each staff member selects one or more goals that he or she is interested in and joins committees formed to address the goal(s). The committees meet as many times as necessary to accomplish each goal.

Rationale

A clear vision statement provides the umbrella under which all the operations are designed.

Benefits

All staff members are involved and working together to accomplish the same objectives.

Challenges

In the beginning, many staff members don't see how they can contribute. Some committees are more productive than others.

Resources

Time and money are needed for staff to go off-site to develop the vision statement and set goals. Another district interested in pursuing this approach might consider hiring an outside person to guide the group the first time.

Contact

Darby Peterson
Northern District of Georgia

Vision Conflicts

Practice

When an officer's personal vision and the district's vision of case management seem to conflict, we promptly hold a meeting between the team leader and the officer. When appropriate, the team leader cites district policy to assure the officer that there is a basis for concern.

Rationale

A meeting of this nature allows for consistent case management and improves communication between the officer and team leader.

Benefits

Legitimizing a concern by citing district policy or by other concrete means makes officers feel better about the action.

Challenges

The team leader needs to express his or her concerns in a way that does not stifle discussion of the issue.

Resources

A good working knowledge of district policies and procedures.

Contact

Phyllis J. Nelson
Central District of Illinois

Cross-sectional Team

Practice

Our district formed an enhanced supervision team consisting of SUSPOs, junior USPOs, and USPOs representing all of the district's offices. The team reviews proposed case supervision policies and develops supervision training sessions.

Rationale

To sustain enhanced supervision initiatives and promote consistent casework.

Benefits

This approach keeps the enhanced supervision message fresh and leads to excellent exchanges between management and staff.

Challenges

Rotating membership to minimize stagnation of ideas.

Resources

Staff time and travel for meetings.

Contact

Ollie Deegan or Will O'Sullivan
Northern District of California

Posting the Vision Statement

Practice

Our district's vision/mission statement is composed by a cross section of staff, including the CUSPO. The statement is posted in all offices. It also appears in the front of the district manual. The vision statement is taught at in-district orientation and is used in USPO candidate and promotional interviews. All actions undertaken are in compliance with the vision.

Rationale

To keep the district's vision/mission in sight, thus emphasizing our goals.

Benefits

Staff have a tangible expression of the "big picture" and of our collective ideals.

Challenges

Preventing the statement from being perceived as nothing more than a collection of platitudes.

Resources

Time, for forming a task group to author the statement, framing costs, etc.

Contact

Will O'Sullivan
Northern District of California

Temporary Duty Assignments

Practice

We encourage officers to participate in temporary duty assignments in other districts.

Rationale

The assignments broaden officers' outlook, develop their skills, and enhance their career development.

Benefits

Exposure to other districts leads to opportunities for promotion inside and outside the district. Officers are more creative and programs more innovative.

Challenges

Available staff is diminished, which can foster resentment among the staff members left to pick up the extra work.

Resources

All staff members' work is affected; however, the office as a whole benefits from the experiences and information that officers bring back.

Contact

Lettie Matthews

District of the District of Columbia

Open House for Stakeholders

Practice

To familiarize stakeholders with our services, our district organized an open house. Staff continue to make presentations to judges, community groups, and law enforcement agencies. We expect to continue this practice as needed.

Rationale

To improve services and public relations.

Benefits

Visibility in the community and improved working relationships.

Challenges

Convincing officers to accept that stakeholders have a legitimate interest in how we do business.

Resources

The extensive time required for organizing the event.

Contact

Colleen M. Rahill-Beuler
Western District of New York

Annual Meeting with the Financial Litigation Unit

Practice

We hold an annual meeting with the U.S. attorney's Financial Litigation Unit.

Rationale

To enhance understanding of fine and restitution collection and to improve communication with the Financial Litigation Unit.

Benefits

Officers keep abreast of changes in Financial Litigation Unit procedures and new laws affecting collection. The meeting establishes ties that facilitate future cooperation.

Challenges

The issues addressed are sometimes confusing and require clarification.

Resources

Three hours: Officers submit questions before attending the meeting.

Contact

Leslie A. Cory
Eastern District of Tennessee

Networking with Stakeholders

Practice

We encourage officers to make contact with local law enforcement officers, state probation officers, community mental health providers, and drug treatment service providers while the officers are in the field. We expect each officer to be involved in at least one public speaking activity a year.

Rationale

Networking with agencies that come in contact with our offenders is very important to ensuring communication with the agencies, educating the agencies about our vital role in the community and receiving feedback about our performance.

Benefits

Officers feel free to use time in the field not just to address specific issues but to do public relations work. They also feel free to develop resources and to establish better lines of communication.

Challenges

Not everyone is good at public speaking, but officers see the need and work at developing skills.

Resources

Networking takes time from other tasks; however, the office considers it a priority. The time and effort required are not factored in the workload formula.

Contact

Rod Huebner
Western District of Wisconsin

(Similar practices were submitted by W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia, and Rick Elledge, District of Utah. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Collecting Articles

Practice

We assemble a notebook for new officers containing copies of *Federal Probation* articles related to legal issues and other areas in which we have an interest—for example, time management, efficiency, leadership, and interpersonal skills. To promote dialogue and strengthen relationships, we also arrange for employees to meet with department heads of related agencies.

Rationale

To establish a better understanding of other agencies: what they do (mission), their needs and their interest in us.

Benefits

A better understanding of who does what strengthens communication, promotes “ownership,” and personalizes officers’ investment in other agencies.

Challenges

Preparing the notebook and meeting representatives of other agencies.

Resources

Agency department heads’ time, *Federal Probation* (and the article notebook).

Contact

Gary Howard
District of Kansas

Meeting with Judges

Practice

We organize a meeting with staff and judges to share information, concerns, and competing interests. Attendees offer their observations, participate in exercises and review statistical data. We conduct joint training to promote mutual support.

Rationale

Judges are disconnected from our daily work and unfamiliar with our available resources. The meeting promotes better understanding and daily communication between staff and judges.

Benefits

Staff and judges develop a common understanding and a shared vision. Judges learn what we are able to do.

Challenges

Organizing the meeting takes time and hard work.

Resources

Facilitators, judges.

Contact

Gary Howard
District of Kansas

Training in Identifying Stakeholders

Practice

In our district, officers are informed about who the stakeholders in the system are and the importance stakeholders play. We stress how vital good relationships with stakeholders are to our supervision efforts. When an officer or stakeholder identifies concerns, we develop training and orientation programs.

Rationale

Good communication between officers and stakeholders is essential. Proper supervision requires stakeholders' input and participation.

Benefits

Relationships with stakeholders improve because officers understand their importance.

Challenges

Identifying stakeholders and establishing cooperation between agencies.

Resources

The training officer and the agency liaison officer.

Contact

Michael J. Meczowski
Eastern District of Virginia

(Similar practices were submitted by Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan, and Marty Wahrer, District of Maine. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Project Teams

Practice

We have formed various project teams to use officers' expertise and imagination in resolving specific problems and improving service. The teams often work directly with stakeholders such as attorneys, judges, and community agencies to develop mutually workable strategies.

Rationale

Much of the valuable knowledge and potential of line staff are underutilized in procedural planning. Very little of the interaction between line staff and stakeholders involves "system improvement;" most is case specific. The relationship between probation officers and stakeholders needs improvement.

Benefits

While working on team projects, line officers interact directly with various system stakeholders. Officers learn to work with others as a team. Staff offer innovative approaches to problems and issues.

Challenges

Arriving at solutions or strategies that are mutually acceptable to various stakeholders can be an arduous task. Officers have crushing workloads, and participating in team meetings takes them away from daily tasks.

Resources

Officers' time, for participating in team meetings.

Contact

John H. Stites
Southern District of Iowa

Using Committees in Decision Making

Practice

We frequently use committees to involve line officers in decision making.

Rationale

To capitalize on officers' talents and enthusiasm.

Benefits

Officers feel responsible for seeking solutions to office problems. We have found the committees to be especially effective in dealing with automation, our internship program, new officer orientation, applicant screening, and officer safety and training.

Challenges

The biggest challenges are to convince staff that they will have meaningful input and to get them to accept responsibility for finding solutions to problems.

Resources

Developing a program or making a decision by committee takes a considerable amount of time.

Contact

Garold T. Ray
District of Minnesota

(A similar practice was submitted by Carol A. Veome, Northern District of Illinois. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Peer Case Reviews

Practice

Each unit member reviews three or four of the other unit members' cases each month.

Rationale

We wanted unit members to become familiar with a broader range of cases, so they would be prepared if they were called on to deal with the cases in the primary officers' absence. We also hoped that unit members would share their unique knowledge and experiences, that strong supervision officers would suggest ideas to weaker staff members, and that the weaker members would adopt some of the strong practices they saw their peers using. We hoped, too, that unit members would develop a greater sense of responsibility for developing supervision strategies.

Benefits

We have not been using this approach very long. The unit has been cooperative, and members seem to like having the opportunity to participate.

Challenges

Convincing officers that they have something to contribute to one another and to the SUSPO.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Larry England, Rick Lenhart, and C. Patrick Crowley
Southern District of Ohio

Career Planning and Goal Setting

Practice

We conduct individual and team career planning and goal setting exercises each year.

Rationale

To help employees and managers identify the employees' preferences, goals, strengths, and weaknesses and to provide job experiences that then help employees satisfy those preferences, achieve goals, use strengths, and improve weaknesses.

Benefits

Employees become more actively involved in setting and achieving goals and managing their careers. Working relationships improve. Creativity and latent talent surface.

Challenges

Getting employees to commit to the process and to follow through.

Resources

One-hour initial meeting with individuals and teams. Follow-up meetings as needed during implementation.

Contact

Carolyn M. Harris
Southern District of Florida

Teaming Concept

Practice

One year ago, our office adopted a “teaming concept.” To ensure the success of this endeavor, we eventually hired consultants to conduct an assessment of the office environment and to provide leadership training to management and team foundation building to the entire staff.

Rationale

We needed to know how to use teams to maximize our efforts and to create a healthier, more cohesive office environment.

Benefits

The consultants, acting as “neutral parties,” have generated enthusiasm among staff. They have identified areas of organizational dysfunction and are conducting training designed specifically to address those areas, as well as to improve our ability to work in teams.

Challenges

Many employees questioned the need to hire consultants after our “teaming process” had been initiated in-house. Convincing top management to spend money for consultants was also a challenge; the cost of using consultants was high.

Resources

Consultants’ fees can range from several thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. Due to the expense, we elected to implement a condensed program. Assessment, training, and consultation services totaled about 30 hours.

Contact

Kent Cameron
District of Utah

Setting Goals

Practice

We encourage continuous improvement by setting specific goals, for individuals as well as the work team, to be achieved in fixed periods, such as one year or three months. All parties agree on steps to accomplish the goals. For example, a goal might be to improve automation skills in three months. The steps for accomplishing the goal could include reading the book *WordPerfect for Dummies*, doing the computer tutorial for Windows, and reviewing the WordPerfect keys with the data quality analyst for one hour a week.

Rationale

To prevent stagnation and encourage career development.

Benefits

Setting goals in this way provides clear expectations for employees and an easier method for supervisors to measure accomplishments.

Challenges

Developing creative, cost-effective resources.

Resources

Resources vary depending on the goal. (Hint: The resource guide for the FJC's Adaptive Manager II workshop may be helpful.)

Contact

Joan Balis
Southern District of Florida

Fostering Creativity and Team Building

Practice

To create an environment that fosters individual creativity and team building, we have implemented a Total Quality Service management style, established unit goals, and encouraged training aimed at individual officers' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, we encourage officers to cross-train and rotate jobs so they become more well rounded.

Rationale

To empower employees to maximize their skills.

Benefits

Professional and personal growth.

Challenges

For our approach to succeed, managers must relax their control, and staff must accept new responsibilities and leave their comfort zones.

Resources

Time, for training; funds for hiring consultants for team building, etc. Training resources are also available through the Federal Judicial Center.

Contact

Anthony M. San Giacomo
Western District of New York

Question of the Week

Practice

We send officers a “Question of the Week” via e-mail on a topic which the supervisor identified in talking with the officers. Officers are referred to the appropriate resource for the answer.

Example: When addressing a violation report to the USPC, is it proper to include the offender’s release date and expiration date, along with the name and register number? If so, in what order do they go? (Refer to the section on violation reports in the *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures*, vol. 10, chap. 7, at 19, 20.)

Rationale

We use hundreds if not thousands of items of information to conduct business in this era of specialization. Supervisors can capitalize on the questions they are asked by sharing the questions and the answers with staff. This procedure will work for all areas: administration, investigations, pretrial, etc.

Benefits

Requiring officers to refer to policy in answering questions encourages resourcefulness.

Challenges

Not all officers take the time to research the answer to the question.

Resources

Computer network with e-mail capabilities. (The messages can be stored to allow review and thus prevent redundancy.)

Contact

Steven Cole
District of Idaho

Special Assignments

Practice

We engaged individuals in developing policy and work strategies by appealing to their interests and strengths. Special assignments have included coordinating the Combined Federal Campaign, dealing with EEO issues, and developing in-house training. Teams are encouraged to meet regularly, and individuals and groups receive training both in-house and through outside sources.

Rationale

We believe special assignments enhance individual and group morale.

Benefits

Individual enthusiasm and motivation are evident. In developing individuals' ideas, teams have come up with better ways for us to achieve our goals.

Challenges

Matching individual interests to the office's needs. Scheduling meetings. Adjusting outside training opportunities to fit our budget.

Resources

Locally paid training amounting to approximately \$2,300 per year; team work sessions totaling about eight hours (64 work-hours) per month.

Contact

Héctor R. Torres-Quñones or Jose R. López
District of Puerto Rico

(Similar practices were submitted by J. Larry White, District of South Carolina; Bernard Ray, Mark Rosenthal, and Ed Mahoney, Southern District of New York; and Gary Howard, District of Kansas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Creating In-House Expertise

Practice

This district is too small for officer specialization beyond substance abuse and sentencing guidelines. Accordingly, we have many project areas such as home confinement, domestic violence, counseling, and search and seizure that require in-depth attention but for which we have no formal specialization. To address such needs, we simply ask officers, based on their interests and abilities, to become our in-house experts and liaison officers in particular areas. Officers research the topics and become local resources for the rest of the office.

Rationale

Our office needs more specialized knowledge and skills than we can provide by hiring or promoting officers.

Benefits

Officers have shown a lot of pride and satisfaction in being experts in given areas, even without receiving extra compensation. They have done an excellent job with their informal assignments.

Challenges

Matching specialized needs with officers' particular interests, skills, and backgrounds. We have been fortunate in that most matches to date have been easy.

Resources

Staff time is needed for planning and arranging assignments, and officers must spend time developing their areas of expertise.

Contact

Alvin Ho
District of Hawaii

(Similar practices were submitted by G. Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama; Ralph D. Pacy and Michael Meczowski, Eastern District of Virginia; David G. Bazán and I.R. Alaniz, Southern District of Texas; William Cazalas, Southern District of Texas; and Bernard Ray, Southern District of New York. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Developing Officers' Talents

Practice

All new staff in our district go through an orientation, during which management can begin to identify individual talents. Thereafter, staff members receive ongoing training to further develop their talents. As officers gain experience, we guide them into specialized training. Eventually, staff are given opportunities to participate in supervisory-level training and to serve as acting supervisors.

Rationale

Identifying and using staff members' talents benefits not only the district but the individuals.

Benefits

The district benefits by having very well-trained staff who are ready to assume positions of greater responsibility. Staff interaction and morale are also improved.

Challenges

Finding time to schedule the training, which may involve a group or an individual.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Richard V. Russell
Western District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Marty Wahrer, District of Maine, and Jim Slaten, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Team Supervision

Practice

When an atypical supervision issue develops, we try to get the officer supervising the case to work with another officer who has expertise in the issue. For example, if the offender's finances are complicated, the senior officer may assist the supervising officer in a computer search of corporations and real estate records.

Rationale

The strengths of various officers are used to resolve complicated supervision issues.

Benefits

Getting two or three officers to work on the same case promotes teamwork and helps officers learn from each other. Better supervision of the case results.

Challenges

We haven't used this approach frequently, but we would like to use it more. It can be very time consuming for all involved.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Fred Wille
District of Maryland

(Similar practices were submitted by John Stites, Southern District of Iowa, and Mike Gillen, Western District of Michigan. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Including Staff Specialists in Planning

Practice

Staff specialists participate in budget and planning meetings.

Rationale

To work together, get the big picture, share ideas, and gain different perspectives.

Benefits

Getting better feedback on the budget, getting ideas from a nonmanagement viewpoint.

Challenges

Getting everyone to consider the needs of all programs; getting participants to prepare adequately for budget meetings and to communicate with each other.

Resources

Time, for meetings.

Contact

JoAnn Coates
Eastern District of Wisconsin

Sharing Successes

Practice

We allow officers as much discretion as possible with their caseloads. We have officers describe how they handled investigations (of an offender's finances, for example) to the other unit members.

Rationale

To build self-esteem while giving officers illustrations of the different things that can be done on certain cases.

Benefits

Officers are motivated to improve some aspects of their performance (how to address a difficult financial case, for example).

Challenges

All officers need to be given the opportunity to explain their successes.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Dan Gonzales
Southern District of California

Self-Evaluation

Practice

Prior to their performance appraisal, we have staff complete a self-evaluation highlighting their accomplishments and containing a goal statement describing areas they would like to strengthen.

Rationale

To keep us informed about morale and workload.

Benefits

Self-evaluation fosters positive change.

Challenges

Takes time.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Gary Howard
District of Kansas

Formal Diversity Training

Practice

Our staff receive formal training to enhance their awareness of and sensitivity to diversity issues. We also maintain a diversity committee in our office to address related concerns.

Rationale

Diversity awareness ensures a more positive working environment for all.

Benefits

Enhanced performance of all staff through stronger working relationships.

Challenges

Maintaining a sense of security that fosters candid discussion of all diversity issues.

Resources

Formal training program, standing committee.

Contact

W.E. Cottrell and Michael Meczkowski
Eastern District of Virginia

Guest Speakers

Practice

We invite speakers from diverse backgrounds to provide sensitivity and diversity training in our office.

Rationale

We need to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to diverse groups to improve conditions in the workplace and to effectively communicate with offenders.

Benefits

Staff have an increased awareness and appreciation of the diverse individuals with whom they come in contact.

Challenges

Demands on employees' time.

Resources

Most speakers volunteer their services.

Contact

Tom Ogden
District of Utah

(Similar practices were submitted by Michael B. Chatman, Middle District of Florida; Jack Verhagan, Western District of Wisconsin; Raul Tovar, Jr., Southern District of Texas; and Colleen M. Rahill Beuler, Western District of New York. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Individual Counseling

Practice

During our monthly staff meetings, everyone has the opportunity to bring up issues related to diversity. If a sensitive situation arises, I have daily conversations with each staff member. I try to be responsive to their concerns.

Rationale

Responsiveness on the part of the supervisor helps keep staff focused on their jobs.

Benefits

Expressing concern over sensitive issues invites collective solutions.

Challenges

Sometimes dealing with sensitive issues leads to emotional stress that impairs performance.

Resources

Individual counseling requires a lot of the supervisor's time, but it often is the only available resource.

Contact

N. Alan Weibel
Southern District of Texas

Participating in Training

Practice

Staff members participate in equal employment opportunity and sexual harassment training. Diversity issues are covered in staff meetings.

Rationale

Understanding diversity improves interpersonal relationships and helps create a work environment free of discrimination.

Benefits

Personnel are more aware of diversity issues and become more open-minded.

Challenges

Overcoming people's sensitivity to diversity issues and getting them involved.

Resources

In-house training.

Contact

José R. López
District of Puerto Rico

Open Discussions

Practice

An agenda item for each unit meeting in our district is “Awareness: Cultural, Professional, and Organizational.” This item is intended to promote open discussion of significant incidents and to provide a structured forum for exchanging ideas. This approach supplements diversity training, educational programs, etc.

Rationale

A hazardous duty incident occurred in our office between an offender and an officer and his supervisor, who were not of the same race as the offender. The incident led to discussions of cultural differences, of perceptions of professional conduct, and of organizational policies.

Benefits

What once was only discussed behind closed doors now has an appropriate forum. Staff can delve into issues, analyze unit members’ diverse perspectives, and take on problems.

Challenges

Establishing open dialogue on diversity issues rather than limited discussion among peers, friends, and allies.

Resources

A thirty-minute-to-one-hour slot at unit meetings.

Contact

Roberta A. Desmond
Northern District of Ohio

Presenting Problem Cases

Practice

At biweekly staffings, officers in our district bring problem cases they want peers and supervisors to help them resolve. Officers briefly outline the problem, relate the details necessary for making an appropriate decision, and offer their resolution.

Rationale

For several years we had been attending treatment facility staffings at which offenders we had referred to the facilities were discussed. Additionally, not knowing how other officers handled particular problems or circumstances had caused some frustration. We thought doing our own staffings would be helpful.

Benefits

Officers receive reinforcement when they are on the right track, as well as gain different perspectives on how to handle problems. The supervisor also gains insight into officers' judgment and problem-solving abilities.

Challenges

Discussion can be time consuming. Officers need to be concise in presenting information, and staff need to keep to the topic. (Discussions always cause officers to recall problems with other cases.) Occasionally, the diversity of suggestions makes determining a resolution difficult.

Resources

Time: Staffing sessions generally last 15 minutes to half an hour.

Contact

James P. Rowoldt
District of Nebraska

(Similar practices were submitted by Marty Wahrer, District of Maine; Héctor R. Torres-Quñones, District of Puerto Rico; Anne C. Pittard, District of South Carolina; Charles L. Curier, Eastern District of Missouri; J. L. Orandello, Michael J. Meczowski, and W. E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia; Gregory Glason, Southern District of Florida; and Dan Gonzales, Southern District of California. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Role Playing

Practice

In our district we role-play hazardous incidents during safety training.

Rationale

Role playing is as close as you can get to the “real thing.”

Benefits

Officers are able to see the mistakes they make in handling dangerous situations.

Challenges

Most people hate role playing.

Resources

We use officers from another office to play offenders. Coming up with realistic scenarios requires a significant amount of preparation.

Contact

David Croft
Eastern District of Tennessee

Encouraging Independence

Practice

We encourage independence of thought from the time officers are hired. To maintain officers' self-confidence, we only review reports from time to time.

Rationale

To be effective, officers must remain independent. They rise and fall on their own mistakes in report writing; learning from their mistakes makes them savvier report writers.

Benefits

Officers maintain a sense of identity and at times enjoy small victories by having an impact on system stakeholders.

Challenges

Continually evaluating our information and the position we are taking. Making sure we are within office policy.

Resources

Time and in-house training programs.

Contact

Ronald E. Kline
Western District of Missouri

Sanction Policy

Practice

We have developed a sanction policy allowing officers discretion in how they handle some violations. The policy indicates which violations the SUSPO must staff and which must be reported to the court. Even for violations requiring other staffing, we encourage the officers to share their ideas about how the violations should be handled.

Rationale

We developed the policy not only to save the SUSPO's time but to encourage officers to develop their casework and decision-making skills.

Benefits

(None given.)

Challenges

Officers must think about what they want to do before discussing a case with the SUSPO. The SUSPO must take time to listen to officers' ideas and not just tell them what to do.

Resources

Time, for developing the policy. (Officers were involved in policy development.)

Contact

JoAnn Coates
Eastern District of Wisconsin

Intermediate Sanctions

Practice

District policy requires that all intermediate sanctions above a verbal admonishment be staffed with the supervisor. (Intermediate sanctions are required in all instances of noncompliance.) The officer contacts the supervisor and explains the issue and the recommended sanction. The staffing procedure with the supervisor allows review of the sanction and, in isolated situations, tempers personal influences. The supervisor “chrono’s” the staffings for future reference.

Rationale

To provide officers with a sounding board for problem cases and to bring an impartial party into the review process.

Benefits

The supervisor encourages officers to use imaginative sanctions. The staffing process also helps to eliminate overreaction or underreaction by officers and to ensure that sanctions fit the circumstances.

Challenges

Initially, officers found staffing intermediate sanctions with the supervisor cumbersome. The supervisor has to be readily available to conduct intermediate staffings. The supervisor also must be nondictatorial.

Resources

Most staffings in the district occur by telephone. Staffings between offices occur where the supervisor is located. This practice requires chrono entries and a district policy regarding staffings for intermediate sanctions.

Contact

Steven Cole
District of Idaho

Observing PO Interaction

Practice

I try to observe POs' interaction with others. I accompany POs in the field and review their cases thoroughly. I also communicate openly with POs and listen neutrally to the comments of POs' peers and others for insight and direction.

Rationale

Without clear and honest communication, assignments, and case staffings, the SUSPO tends to be dictatorial.

Benefits

Personal insight allows for greater accuracy in assignments.

Challenges

Establishing trust.

Resources

Time.

Contact

E. Hippel
Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Team Meetings with Individual Follow-up

Practice

We hold biweekly team meetings to encourage officers to discuss problem cases and possible solutions and to give the SUSPO insight into officers' thinking. Each officer brings up to five "hot" problem cases to the meetings for discussion and evaluation. Only supervision officers attend the meetings. Later, the SUSPO talks with officers individually, to address concerns in a more casual setting.

Rationale

To keep the level of supervision and professionalism high.

Benefits

Officers gain self-confidence when peers endorse their judgment calls. The private talks with the SUSPO give them a "reality check" if their decisions miss the mark.

Challenges

Getting new officers to open up and join in group discussions. Also, convincing veteran officers, who sometimes have more years of service than the SUSPO, to accept direction and guidance.

Resources

As much time as it takes, plus sensitivity and intuition.

Contact

Patrick O. Culbertson
District of South Carolina

Justifying Decisions

Practice

I require officers to provide justification for their decisions, citing the manual, Monograph 109, case law, etc., where appropriate. I also reminded officers that they must be able to defend their decisions in court.

Rationale

Officers must be able to specify how they arrived at their decisions and to accept responsibility for their decisions.

Benefits

Officers are less likely to make emotional decisions against the advice of others when reminded that they must be able to defend their decisions in court.

Challenges

Some officers have a difficult time seeing the flaws in their decisions, and sometimes I have a difficult time seeing the flaws in my advice.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Bill Cazalas
Southern District of Texas

Providing Advice and Support

Practice

Our district takes a proactive approach to providing advice and support. We engage in active listening and give staff time to vent and to reflect. We also encourage staff to share experiences, explore new alternatives, and prioritize.

Rationale

To ensure open lines of communication and to let staff know that we believe accessibility is important. To convey ideas of teamwork and joint ownership of the district's mission.

Benefits

Sharing feelings and experiences promotes awareness of others. Paraphrasing others' comments and asking open-ended questions encourages problem solving and self-reliance.

Challenges

The combination of downsizing and a growing workload makes staff feel that they are overwhelmed and that their problems are insurmountable. We must overcome feelings of isolation. Active listening takes time, however, and pulls both SUSPO and staff members away from other duties, adding to stress.

Resources

One hour a week.

Contact

Robert G. Singleton
Eastern District of North Carolina

(Similar practices were submitted by Manuel Alonzo, Southern District of California; Karen M. Renzoni, Western District of New York; Becky Adams and J.L. Orandello, Eastern District of Virginia; and Michalah Bracken and Joseph Veltre, Southern District of New York. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Working to Understand POs

Practice

In our district, we try to know the POs. We note responses to assignments and how POs handle confrontation. Where possible, we assign cases according to POs' strengths.

Rationale

POs are less likely to use discretion and to take pride in their work if the SUSPO is dictatorial.

Benefits

POs and the SUSPO cooperate. POs take responsibility for good case supervision practices.

Challenges

The SUSPO needs to be flexible, and the SUSPO and PO need to communicate openly.

Resources

Time.

Contact

E. Hippel
Eastern District of Pennsylvania

(A similar practice was submitted by Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Fitness Program

Practice

Our office allows officers three hours a week to engage in physical fitness activities.

Rationale

This program was implemented to reduce stress and maintain physical fitness.

Benefits

We believe that strengthening the cardiovascular system through regular exercise enhances officers' job performance.

Challenges

Monitoring officers' hours; making sure officers are actually engaging in fitness activities; making sure that all work still gets done.

Resources

Three hours a week for each participating officer.

Contact

Robert Walford
Southern District of California

(Similar practices were submitted by Bonna Bellinger, District of Utah; Wesley A. Martin, District of Nevada; C. Patrick Crowley, Southern District of Ohio; and Jim Slaten, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Walking in Officers' Shoes

Practice

I spend no less than one day each quarter, preferably during a busy period, writing pretrial service reports, seeing defendants, and taking UAs for the officers.

Rationale

To help officers deal with stress, I believe I have to understand it myself.

Benefits

I discovered problems with the forms package that were causing stress. A new forms package and a color coding system for UA collection are now being developed.

Challenges

Changing my schedule to assume line officers' duties.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Teresa Acosta
Western District of Texas

(A similar practice was submitted by Mike Carion, District of Arizona. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Balancing Assignments

Practice

We strive to reduce stress by assigning cases fairly. We also encourage staff to diffuse stress by comparing experiences.

Rationale

Officers need to “vent” among themselves.

Benefits

A less tense office environment.

Challenges

None.

Resources

Time.

Contact

N. Alan Weibel
Southern District of Texas

Compressed Work Schedule

Practice

We implemented a compressed work schedule in our district, allowing officers and support staff to work eight-, nine-, or ten-hour days. Those who work nine-hour days usually take every other Friday or Monday off. Those who work ten-hour days usually take every Friday or Monday off. (Employees can also take their day off in the middle of the week.) We encourage officers to work in teams so that their partners can cover for them on their days off. Officers are expected to come in on their days off if they are needed.

Rationale

Due to the demands and stress associated with probation work, some employees have requested the option of having three-day, rather than two-day weekends. In addition, many of our employees must work nontraditional hours to be accessible to offenders. An extended work day allows the office to be open after standard hours and makes officers consistently available.

Benefits

Officers are more available to offenders and to the public. Officers' morale and their physical and mental well-being improve.

Challenges

Convincing top management that compressed schedules will not decrease work productivity and accountability. Setting up schedules so that there is always adequate office coverage. Handling emergencies that arise on officers' days off.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Bonna Bellinger
District of Utah

(Similar practices were submitted by Furman Muzzall, Middle District of Tennessee, and Susan Rodolf, Western District of Texas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Supportive Discussion

Practice

I have found that changes in work performance are usually associated with stress. Therefore, when I discuss performance-related problems with officers, I describe specifically what I have observed and my reaction, allowing the officers to respond and correct misunderstandings. I try to support officers and to refer them to the right sources for assistance.

Rationale

Identifying officers' stressors benefits everyone in the district.

Benefits

As a supervisor I can provide guidance to improve officers' productivity.

Challenges

Sometimes an officer's rationale is different from what I expected.

Resources

Employee Assistance Program, and time.

Contact

Michael J. Meczkowski
Eastern District of Virginia

(Similar practices were submitted by Anne C. Pittard, District of South Carolina; Hal Langenbahn and Phyllis J. Nelson, Central District of Illinois. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Maintaining an Open Dialogue

Practice

MBWA—Management By Walking About—is crucial to maintaining an open dialogue with officers. Regular interaction with officers and inquiries as to their well-being enables managers to identify changes in attitude, behavior, and work performance. Reassuring officers and providing assistance when problems occur decreases stress levels and increases the probability that officers will disclose the source of problems. Relief can take the form of workload assistance, leave, and aid through the Employee Assistance Program.

Rationale

Identifying and correcting problems related to work can stem the growth of problems and minimize their personal and professional effects.

Benefits

Officers know assistance is available to them and perceive that the organization values them.

Challenges

There is a gray area where the personal crosses the professional. Supervisors must be careful not to cross boundaries while addressing problems.

Resources

While these practices take time from other areas, we believe they constitute an investment which saves time and resources in the long term.

Contact

Thomas A. Henry
District of New Jersey

Weekly Discussions

Practice

To understand officers' problems and to open the door to discussing the stressors they encounter at work, I try to talk with officers in their offices every week. The topics we discuss can be unrelated to work.

Rationale

Officers should feel that their supervisors are interested in them for other reasons besides work production.

Benefits

Officers are more likely to express their thoughts.

Challenges

Some officers are very private, others are not very trusting, and others are a combination of both.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Bill Cazalas
District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Ralph D. Pacy, Eastern District of Virginia, and Héctor R. Torres-Quinones, District of Puerto Rico. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Identifying Resources

Practice

We encourage officers to network with established community resources, to investigate community agencies that may provide services to offenders on the officers' caseloads, and to share information on resources with team members. Community resource development is also reflected in performance evaluations.

Rationale

Because of budget cuts, many local and federal programs have been scaled back or eliminated. Also, probation now focuses more on court orders and risk control rather than traditional rehabilitation. As an extension of the community, the probation officer is in a good position to identify new resources.

Benefits

One benefit of this approach is that resources often remain available after a supervision assignment ends, leaving a support system in place for subsequent offenders. Many services are available at no cost to the probation office or offender population.

Challenges

Educating agencies about the need to work with offenders is challenging. Officers need to be trained to recognize and develop community resources to address correctional treatment issues.

Resources

Other officers, community newsletters, professional publications, daily newspapers, other professionals in the community.

Contact

Thyra Benoit

District of the District of Columbia

(Similar practices were submitted by Dennis R. Bates, Middle District of Tennessee; J. Larry White, District of South Carolina; W.E. Cottrell, Ralph D. Pacey, and Michael Meczowski, Eastern District of Virginia; Charles L. Currier, Eastern District of Missouri; G. Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama; Lewis Slay, Northern District of Mississippi; and Jackie Peoples, Northern District of California. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Visiting Law Enforcement Agencies

Practice

To involve USPOs with community resources, our supervision team travels to different agencies, police divisions, and other federal law enforcement agencies' work sites and meets all their employees, including clerical staff and receptionists as well as officers. We also identify one liaison for our office at each agency.

Rationale

Having recently bifurcated, we realized that our office had very few community contacts for supervision and that we needed to establish ourselves with other law enforcement agencies.

Benefits

These meetings establish excellent rapport. Now, when USPOs call other agencies, we get great service. We have help supervising offenders. We work closely with local police, FBI task forces, and intelligence agencies. And we have constant information regarding offenders' activities.

Challenges

Getting all of our USPOs and other agencies' officers in the same place at the same time.

Resources

USPOs time, for traveling to other agencies.

Contact

Anita Chavez
District of New Mexico

Assigning Senior Officers to Special Projects

Practice

We promote community-focused officers to specialist or senior officer positions. Core groups of specialists and SUSPOs develop community links and programs. Senior officers who set examples for line staff in exploring and using community resources are assigned special projects and make staff presentations.

Rationale

Officers designated as staff links to community resources become conduits for referral and follow-up.

Benefits

Specialists/seniors become in-house resources for staff. SUSPOs are relieved of “wearing too many hats” and being “women or men for all seasons.”

Challenges

The main challenge is promoting the right officers—those who are models of energetic exploration of community resources, effort, and dedication.

Resources

Salary increases for promoted staff.

Contact

Will O’Sullivan, Beverly Brook, or Lee McGriff
Northern District of California

Attending Law Enforcement Meetings

Practice

We encourage officers to attend a monthly luncheon, held at a local cafeteria, featuring speakers on law enforcement topics.

Rationale

To ensure officers keep in touch with other law enforcement agencies and current trends.

Benefits

We have established contacts with other agencies, enabling us to exchange information and develop trusting relationships with them.

Challenges

Keeping people informed of the luncheon date.

Resources

One hour per month.

Contact

Greg Johnson
Northern District of Oklahoma

(A similar practice was submitted by Paul Billmeyer, Western District of Wisconsin. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Involvement with Community Organizations

Practice

We encourage officers to become familiar with various civic organizations, support groups, and public and private agencies, including job services and counseling, training, and treatment providers. We introduce new officers to key people in these agencies during training.

Rationale

Good community resources are essential to effective supervision, and developing these resources is an important aspect of an officer's job.

Benefits

Using community resources for supervision planning makes the planning much easier and more effective and eases the offender's integration with service providers. Interaction with community agencies also allows the community to appreciate officers' value.

Challenges

Challenges include identifying and developing key resources in the community and determining how they can benefit offenders. Effort must be made to ensure that all individuals and agencies are able to work comfortably with offenders and to encourage offenders' cooperation with providers. Creativity and the ability to get along with others are important.

Resources

A new officer or an experienced officer assigned to a new territory will normally spend several weeks establishing the close working relationships that are needed to get the job done. This relationship-building work must be done face-to-face and should be viewed as an ongoing process.

Contact

Joe M. Neely
Eastern District of North Carolina

Acknowledging Officers' Efforts

Practice

We invite representatives from other agencies to attend team meetings and office functions to describe their programs. We also encourage officers to visit agencies' sites when they are in the field and to contact local precincts and relevant programs. We have officers describe their efforts to develop community resources at team meetings, and we follow through by acknowledging these efforts in their evaluations.

Rationale

Although a number of actions are listed above, the theme is the same: To supervise properly, officers must be familiar with community resources, not only for making referrals but for keeping track of offenders' adjustment. Positive feedback regarding officers' efforts, especially acknowledgment in front of their peers, seems to motivate officers most.

Benefits

When resource development is acknowledged, other officers begin to get involved.

Challenges

Resistance—developing resources is seen as more work. When officers observe that the knowledge they gain contributes to the quality of their supervision, however, their attitude changes in most cases.

Resources

Acknowledging officers' efforts costs nothing.

Contact

Bernard Ray
Southern District of New York

(A similar practice was submitted by John H. Stites, Southern District of Iowa. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Resource Directory

Practice

To help probation officers build resources, we developed a resource directory for each of the municipalities in which officers work. The directory is substantial and includes categories such as local courts, veterans' services, homeless shelters, employment assistance, counseling programs, law enforcement, senior citizens' programs, military installations, and health care. The directory is available in hard copy for use in the field, as well as on computer for office use. (Note: The district will provide a sample directory on request.)

Rationale

We developed the directory primarily to make officers aware of resources which might otherwise go unknown to them. A strong resource network allows us to supervise cases more efficiently and effectively.

Benefits

Officers are becoming aware of and using programs they did not know existed before, extending their resource network considerably.

Challenges

The resource directory was slow to catch on with some officers. We encouraged them to use it, however, and most probation officers now consult the directory frequently.

Resources

District resources include two volunteer probation officers who compile the material on their own time, and a clerk who volunteers to enter the material in the computer. We duplicate the manuals ourselves, thereby avoiding printing expenses.

Contact

David A. Wagner
Eastern District of Virginia

(A similar practice was also submitted by Russ Heuberger, Southern District of Illinois. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Developing New Resources

Practice

We constantly urge officers to use resources and to expand their resource banks. Officers individually contact agencies offering drug and alcohol treatment (although we have contracts in place, there are always offenders outside geographical confines), mental health treatment (as new mental health issues surface, new specialties are required), and job placement services. Officers also work with shelters, community service organizations, social service agencies, and automated resource programs.

Rationale

To meet the clients' changing needs. To improve our service to the court.

Benefits

Better response to conditions of release and client needs.

Challenges

Our client base changes constantly, requiring new resources and expertise (for example, for computer pornography and other automation-related crimes).

Resources

Investigating and using new resources takes time at first but saves officers time later and strengthens officers' effectiveness.

Contact

Thomas A. Henry
District of New Jersey

(Similar practices were submitted by Anne C. Pittard, District of South Carolina; David Schoeck, Northern District of Ohio; and Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Assigning a Liaison Officer

Practice

We assign each officer a resource agency in the community and require him or her to establish contact with someone at the agency. At a staff meeting, the officer must make a presentation describing how the agency can benefit our office and how to work with the agency.

Rationale

Officers tend to use only the resource agencies with which they are most familiar.

Benefits

All officers receive pamphlets or memos about each agency investigated, so they have written information to refer to later.

Challenges

Officers tend to file away the resource material instead of use it.

Resources

Time, copy machine.

Contact

Bill Cazalas
Southern District of Texas

Assigning Cases by Geographic Location

Practice

We assign pretrial services officers to cases in defined geographic areas, allowing officers to become more familiar with community resources for offender treatment.

Rationale

The Central District of California is very large and has limited public transportation. Assigning a pretrial services officer to a specific area reduces the amount of driving required for field visits and allows face-to-face contact with clients unable to make office visits due to transportation or employment problems.

Benefits

Officers have discovered valuable community-based social service programs and have exchanged information on programs with officers covering other supervision areas. Reduced travel expenditures and savings realized by using local social service programs at no cost to pretrial services allows money to be spent on more expensive social programs, residential drug and alcohol placements, etc., when needed. Assigning supervision areas has also allowed pretrial services to interact with the community on a professional and personal basis.

Challenges

Initially, some officers objected to being assigned to a specific area or to a different area.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Robert Williams
Central District of California

Case File Audits

Field Audits

Practice

To supplement regular Probation PACTS printouts of pending case reviews, I conduct regular field audits during ride-a-longs with officers and provide written feedback on each contact. I offer praise as well as constructive criticism in every case review and initial classification. Officers recognize the case review as a resource. I have an open-door policy, and I often have conferences with individual officers and the offenders the officers are supervising.

Rationale

I believe it is imperative to provide officers with regular audits and written feedback on each of their cases to ensure that all relevant issues are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

Benefits

A uniform approach to case audits.

Challenges

Finding the time to provide regular audits on nearly 300 active cases is challenging. Also, because of a large magistrate court caseload, we are faced with a transitional group.

Resources

The PACTS database.

Contact

L. Thomas Langley, Jr.
Eastern District of North Carolina

Tracking Case File Audits

Practice

Each month we print out caseload lists which we color code to identify case reviews due, initial classifications due (first 30 days and second 30 days), and terminations. We use icons to identify supervision activities such as address verification, electronic monitoring, and urine analysis. Each officer is assigned a particular date to submit his or her case files to the supervisor each month. The due dates are staggered so that the supervisor does not have to review all of the cases at the same time.

Rationale

Tracking case reviews, initials, etc. and identifying cases with special requirements was difficult for the supervisor and officers.

Benefits

More timely submission of case reviews and improved tracking of activities due.

Challenges

Some officers have been reluctant to keep their caseload lists updated and to review the lists monthly for accuracy with their clerks before distribution.

Resources

Time required to produce accurate caseload lists: approximately 15 minutes for the officer and 30 minutes for the clerk, per officer.

Contact

Valli Kelly
District of Utah

(Similar practices were submitted by Hal Langenbahn and Joyce Benton, Central District of Illinois; Karen M. Gilliam and J. Ray Young, Northern District of Florida; N. Alan Weibel, Southern District of Texas; Mike Gillen, Western District of Michigan; Fred S. Tryles, Eastern District of Michigan; Gregory Glasson, Southern District of Florida; Wesley Martin, District of Nevada; Becky Adams, Eastern District of Virginia; Wilson Castle, Southern District of Alabama; and Mike Pisor, Southern District of California. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Reviewing Files with Officers

Practice

At a specific time each month, the supervisor meets with each officer to go over case reviews and files.

Rationale

To ensure that case reviews are timely and supervision goals are being met.

Benefits

Case reviews are done on time. Officers like face-to-face discussions of case reviews.

Challenges

Getting officers to be on time with case reviews and to meet supervision goals on time.

Resources

Two to three hours per month per officer.

Contact

J. Michael Denning
Western District of Texas

(A similar practice was submitted by Paul Visokay, District of Connecticut. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Cross-Unit Reviews

Practice

Our district has annual cross-unit reviews of supervision files.

Rationale

These reviews are intended to ensure that all units in the district are providing supervision consistent with Monograph 109; to identify training, equipment, etc. needed for effective supervision; and to provide feedback to officers and the unit.

Benefits

We have identified equipment and training deficits that we were able to address. We have also established benchmarks for improvement of individual officers and units.

Challenges

Cross-unit reviews disrupt the normal routine, and some staff find them threatening.

Resources

Time is needed to review instruments, train staff in the review process, and prepare review findings for presentation to the units and management. Time is also needed for the SUSPO to review results with unit staff and for reviewers to meet for debriefing. There is also the SUSPO's per diem cost of traveling to other units to conduct reviews.

Contact

Tom Corbett
District of Montana

(A similar practice was submitted by Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Working Together to Perform Audits

Practice

In our district, supervisors perform audits together.

Rationale

This practice ensures that supervisors are consistent in enforcing office policy and procedures and that officers on the various teams are evaluated by the same standard. Supervisors are able to discuss situations or practices observed in case file reviews.

Benefits

Supervisors achieve a consensus on case file management, and they are able to review case files more objectively. Caseload and supervision practices among individual officers and teams are compared more easily, effective practices are encouraged, and ineffective practices are eliminated.

Challenges

Officers need to be convinced that supervisors are not ganging up on them. Given the distance between offices and the demands on the three supervisors' time, scheduling the annual caseload reviews can be difficult.

Resources

Funds for per diem and mileage expenses.

Contact

Aletha M. Gardner
Eastern District of Michigan

Access to Chronos

Practice

In our district, the supervisor can access all of the officers' chronological entries on the computer. The supervisor reviews the chronos periodically and follows up with officers.

Rationale

Easy access to chronos enables the supervisor to respond to other districts' queries regarding case status.

Benefits

Knowing that the chronos are subject to review at any time, officers are more likely to enter them on time. The supervisor can also make entries when they have contact with clients or conduct compliance hearings.

Challenges

Working on the computer network.

Resources

Computer network.

Contact

Anita L. Chavez
District of New Mexico

Tracking Forms

Practice

We developed a tracking form to assist with the six-month review of supervision cases. The one-page form indicates each of the conditions imposed, the frequency and type of activity to monitor, the conditions indicated on the Initial Case Supervision Plan (ICSP), and the dates the supervision activities should be accomplished to monitor the conditions.

Rationale

Reading the chronological record of supervision cases and trying to remember whether each supervision strategy was accomplished at the frequency indicated and according to the type of contact indicated on the ICSP was very laborious if the supervisor didn't keep a lot of notes while reviewing the case file.

Benefits

Case files are easier to review and clearly indicate to the supervisor and to the officer which strategies were used, the type of contact, and whether the frequencies indicated in the ICSPs were met. Officers have elected to use the form in a bright yellow color as the first page of the case file, providing a one-page "snapshot" of the conditions, strategies, and dates for accomplishing all the supervision activities in the case, including criminal record checks, residence verification, release status reports, and due dates for six-month reviews. This snapshot encourages officers to review monitoring activities with a view towards requesting modification of conditions that are no longer needed.

Challenges

Keeping officers from viewing the form as just one more piece of paper.

Resources

Bright yellow paper for printing the form.

Contact

Carol YN Cabell
District of Maryland

(Similar practices were submitted by Daniel Blahusch, District of New Jersey; Will O'Sullivan, Northern District of California; and Craig Valashek, Western District of Texas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Team Assessment

Practice

In the past few years, we have conducted team assessments in addition to regular six-month case reviews in our district. In the assessment process, based on the Federal Judicial Center's *A Manager's Guide to Self-Assessment of Enhanced Supervision*, a team composed of the chief, deputy chief, a supervisor, a senior officer, and a line officer review an officer's entire caseload. We have developed a simple, one-page form that outlines the general pattern of supervision and answers the question, Is supervision being handled in a way that would satisfy a reasonable person?

Rationale

We want to ensure that our supervision efforts are up to standard. By having a group assess caseloads, we are able to draw on several people's expertise. The deputy chief always compiles the summary report so that supervision trends can be identified and discussed consistently.

Benefits

We feel confident that we are on top of supervision in this district and that we do not have to wait for an outside body, such as the AO or parole commission, to tell us things that we should have been aware of all along. Assessment team members often learn strategies from the officers whose cases are being reviewed and can share these strategies with the entire office.

Challenges

We had to overcome initial resistance to the program and to deal with feelings that it was an attempt to target people or to overly criticize officers' performance. Having a line officer on the team has helped defuse the situation.

Resources

The only resource required is the review team members' time. We have found that five or six reviewers can go over a caseload of approximately 55 offenders in four to five hours. The deputy chief then has to compile the report, but we feel that the time is not excessive and that it is well spent.

(continued on reverse)

Contact

Thomas M. Collins
District of Nevada

(Similar practices were submitted by John Babi, Western District of New York; Patrick Culbertson, District of South Carolina; and Anita Chavez, District of New Mexico. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Maximizing the Benefits of PACTS

Practice

In Austin, we have tried to maximize the use of PACTS. At the beginning of each month, officers are provided with a number of PACTS printouts that they can use as case management tools. These printouts include total caseload, special conditions, case reviews due, F-3s due, and cases due to expire. We ask the officers if the information is correct. Also, we ask that all officers and support staff adhere to office policies concerning timely and accurate input. Monthly case reviews are completed using the PACTS printout, minimizing the time that the supervisor has the file.

Rationale

As caseloads and officer responsibilities have grown, maximizing computer tracking of supervision issues and conditions has just made good sense. What we do would be very difficult without automation.

Benefits

We now have ongoing quality control and feedback from officers. We are able to review, identify, correct, update, and measure enforcement and compliance using PACTS—often without physically touching the file.

Challenges

We have to make sure that accurate information is being input. We have instituted a number of quality control measures to ensure the integrity of the information.

Resources

Time, to input the information in the computer. The district has provided ongoing training as PACTS use has grown.

Contact

Ken Beene
Western District of Texas

Summarizing Results and Identifying Trends

Practice

Each month we audit 10% of our officers' workload for investigations assigned, cases supervised (excluding cases due for review), and travel. The audit centers on conformity of work with policies and procedures. Results are summarized without identifying the officers audited, and the summary is given to the CUSPO, who provides information about district trends and issues. PACTS entries on summarized cases are also reviewed. As a SUSPO, I provide a copy of the summary to audited officers and meet with them to discuss findings and solicit suggestions for improving work.

Rationale

We began workload audits to ensure consistent work quality and to identify casework trends that management might need to address.

Benefits

Better supervision and investigations are the primary benefits of audits.

Challenges

We have to convince officers that the audits are centered on individual improvement—that officers are not targeted. The fact that the CUSPO does not know who is audited each month reassures officers.

Resources

Audits require about two to three hours per officer. Discussing audits with officers takes about half an hour for each person.

Contact

Cleatrice McTorry
Middle District of Tennessee

(A similar practice was submitted by Allen Siegel, Eastern District of Pennsylvania. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Random Case Reviews Using PACTS

Practice

Every six months the supervisor conducts an on-site case file audit. The supervisor reviews all cases for officers with less than two years' tenure in the district, and 25% of cases, randomly selected, for officers with more than two years' tenure. The random selection is made by computer, using PACTS entries assigned to officers. The audit results are entered into a district audit program using the same format as the supervisor's case plan review used in the probation caseload management program. The case audit program, however, also enables reports to be generated for statistical purposes. For instance, the supervisor can get printouts of audited cases that do not comply with scheduled supervision activities. The program also provides district-wide data and allows the user to specify date ranges.

Rationale

Our district needed to standardize caseload review practices and to allow gathering of district-wide and officer-specific statistics. Semiannual on-site caseload reviews enable the supervisor to assess officers' supervision activities and to correct problems before they become established. After two years, the supervisor can assume with relative certainty that an officer has acquired all the skills necessary to manage a caseload; therefore, reviewing every case is unnecessary. Random sampling prevents officers from sanitizing cases before the review.

Benefits

This audit procedure is a "win-win" proposition. The supervisor wins by acquiring a database for statistical purposes while confirming that supervision activities are effective. The officer wins by having his work reviewed objectively. Both the supervisor and the officer win by having a record of the review for each individual case as well as for the entire district. Training needs can be identified so that problems are corrected before they become systemic. Case review is consistent from audit to audit.

Challenges

As with any review of work, employees tend to resent the supervisor's intrusion. This problem is remedied largely through the individual management skills of the supervisor. If the audit process is beneficial to them, officers will support rather than oppose it.

(continued on reverse)

Resources

The audit requires a computer and programming resources. The investment is considerable; however, once in place, it will not require any further revisions.

Contact

Steven Cole
District of Idaho

(A similar practice was submitted by Gary Howard, District of Kansas. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Quality Assurance

Safety Checklist

Practice

During initial assessment, officers use a checklist to determine offenders' risk of violence.

Rationale

To ensure that officers evaluate safety issues for each offender they supervise.

Benefits

Officers' initial plans reflect more thoughtful consideration of safety issues.

Challenges

Some training in how to use the checklist is necessary.

Resources

Initial training, plus an additional 15 minutes or so during assessment.

Contact

Leslie Cory
Eastern District of Tennessee

Using Senior Officers as Team Leaders

Practice

In our district, experienced senior officers who are supervising cases serve as team leaders to provide constant guidance to other officers in each unit.

Rationale

Officers with supervision experience are able to keep up with local community issues and coach other officers in assessing and addressing offenders' problems.

Benefits

Officers see team leaders as more in touch with supervision issues. Seniors are able to spend more time discussing cases and guiding officers.

Challenges

Some of the seniors' workload must be shifted to others before the seniors can be developed into team leaders.

Resources

Staff time.

Contact

Kevin D. Lyons
Western District of New York

Modified Case Review Form

Practice

The SUSPO in our district uses a modified case review form at monthly staffings with individual officers. This form is the subject of a pilot project currently being conducted in the District of Nevada. (Note: the form is available on request from the district.)

Rationale

The form is intended to improve information exchanged between the probation officers and the SUSPO concerning offenders' progress and supervision strategies for problematic cases.

Benefits

Using the form improves the supervision of offenders and promotes greater awareness of key supervision issues and more effective responses to supervision impediments. The form reduces paperwork, allowing staff to address enforcement, risk control, and treatment issues on a single sheet of paper.

Challenges

Staff must adjust to using the form. Scheduling time for staffings and developing a team approach to problem solving are other challenges.

Resources

One to two hours per month per officer.

Contact

Terence Sherbondy
District of Nevada

(Similar practices were submitted by Thomas F. Merigan, Jr., District of Massachusetts, and W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Face-to-Face Discussions During Audits

Practice

When conducting audits, the Supervisor in our district discusses disagreements over supervision plans face-to-face with the officers. We defer to the officers if their plans are appropriate and can be implemented safely.

Rationale

To motivate officers by letting them know that their ideas and plans are important.

Benefits

Time spent early in the supervisor-officer relationship pays off as officers learn to think independently and begin to recognize the usefulness of feedback.

Challenges

Some officers perceive feedback as criticism.

Resources

Conducting audits requires more time when the supervisor provides verbal feedback.

Contact

Sandra Fry
Northern District of Texas

Cooperative Staffing

Practice

In our district, the officer, the SUSPO, and a specialist staff cases involving drug treatment. In addition, highly visible cases in which violence or public notoriety is a factor are staffed by the officer, the SUSPO, and the DCUSPO or CUSPO.

Rationale

To bring more expertise to the development of supervision plans for drug users and high-risk offenders.

Benefits

Helps officers identify problems, set priorities, and manage their time.

Challenges

Convincing officers our intent is to assist them, not control their decisions. Developing the system for tracking cases to be staffed. Scheduling staffings (getting three or more people together can be difficult).

Resources

Staffing time ranges from five to fifteen minutes for each case.

Contact

Roger St. George
District of Minnesota

Detention Review

Practice

For all defendants detained without bond, officers must complete detention review forms ten days after and thirty days after the bond hearing, noting any new information to be considered; contacts with family, AUSA, defense counsel, etc.; and whether the person should be considered for release. The supervisor reviews these forms.

Rationale

To ensure that all information pertaining to possible bail release is considered.

Benefits

Defendants are not unnecessarily detained. Releasing defendants who don't need to be detained also saves money.

Challenges

Ensuring that officers comply with deadlines.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Coleen Sears
Southern District of Ohio

Document Review

Practice

I encourage my team to include me on difficult case staffings. I also use team meetings to staff cases. At staffings, I have officers review the presentence report, half-way house reports, and institutional reports for behavior patterns that are criminal or characteristic of criminals. We also check the Salient Factor Score and RPS 80, then review the Judgment and Commitment order to see if the court set special conditions addressing the offenders' illegal or antisocial behaviors. After reviewing all this information, we consider how offenders' current behavior relates to their histories. The officers then decide what level of supervision and what supervision activities are appropriate.

Rationale

Officers make better decisions if they follow a thorough, step-by-step process and consult case histories when evaluating cases for supervision.

Benefits

Officers devise better supervision plans: Using offenders' case histories makes officers more objective and more confident in their decisions.

Challenges

When busy, officers look for shortcuts. Also, because thorough reviews are time consuming and can result in more work, officers may prefer not to staff certain cases. The SUSPO therefore often has to request case staffings.

Resources

Thorough document review requires a time investment.

Contact

Gary Zilli
Eastern District of Michigan

Early Personal Contact with Offenders

Practice

Although the enhanced supervision model does not impose monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly contact with offenders, we continue to stress the need for sufficient personal contact at the start of supervision to establish relationships with the offenders. Officers are expected to personally contact offenders at the start and finish of prerelease and halfway house placements.

Rationale

Officers initially applied the enhanced supervision model to rationalize minimal contact with offenders who appeared to be low risk. This was a problem at the start of supervision when offenders and officers lacked sufficient contact to become familiar with each other. Establishing honest, trusting relationships is crucial to addressing offenders' needs.

Benefits

Developing rapport with offenders pays off in improved planning, needs and risk assessment, and problem avoidance.

Challenges

Very few. Most officers understand the value of early contact with offenders.

Resources

We do not receive workload credit for the time we spend with offenders during the prerelease stage.

Contact

Rod Huebner
Western District of Wisconsin

Training and Discussions

Practice

Officers in our district periodically receive training in ethics and the Code of Conduct. Ethical issues that come to management's attention are discussed at staff meetings.

Rationale

Incidents and questions from officers indicate that certain issues are unclear.

Benefits

Observation following training and discussions shows that officers understand issues better and that they comply with the code.

Challenges

None.

Resources

Time during staff meetings, and funds to send officers to ethics training.

Contact

Paul Visokay
District of Connecticut

(Similar practices were also submitted by Michael J. Meczowski and W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia; Joseph Forcinito and Theodore Rose, Southern District of New York; and Dennis R. Bates, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Periodic Refresher Training

Practice

As a follow-up to the FJC's ethics training package, our staff receive periodic ethics refreshers as an adjunct to regular training. Additionally, supervisory staff are expected to "lead by example," following the Code of Conduct and the district's comprehensive office policy manual. For instance, all personnel, from the chief down, sign in and out on a common attendance sheet.

Rationale

The "management module" included in the FJC ethics course alerted administrators to numerous potential problems. Refreshers remind all staff of their responsibilities and the pitfalls that await the unwary.

Benefits

This district was not plagued by unethical behavior, so the refreshers cannot be said to have produced marked changes in staff behavior. However, everyone, including administrators and line staff, is now familiar with the Code of Conduct and with standards of behavior.

Challenges

None.

Resources

The original ethics training program took several days for each employee—a substantial investment in work hours. Refresher training involves only a couple of hours a year, added to other training activities.

Contact

Gerald L. Duncan
Southern District of Alabama

(A similar practice was submitted by David Schoeck, Northern District of Ohio. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Office Policy Manual

Practice

We developed a comprehensive office policy manual that is frequently updated.

Rationale

Having written policies and procedures ensures that all personnel are subject to the same standards and that staff know what is expected of them. Updating the manual helps ensure that changes in statutes and new case law are communicated to staff.

Benefits

Personnel are informed of management and court expectations; policies are administered equitably; and standards of behavior, work requirements, and policy changes are communicated to all. In addition, following written policies consumes fewer resources than continuously deciding what to do.

Challenges

It is a challenge to foresee all issues that might arise and to have policies in place addressing them. For this reason, a policy manual must be considered a “work in progress.”

Resources

The manual was completed by staff members using current personnel allocations.

Contact

Gerald L. Duncan, Jr.
Southern District of Alabama

Reviewing Work

Practice

To ensure that our court's integrity is upheld and that officers are acting in an appropriate manner, I cross-check chronos with travel vouchers and ask system stakeholders, on a casual basis, about officers' performance. I also gauge conduct through general discussions with officers and review of case files and officers' other work.

Rationale

(None given.)

Benefits

Being alert to poor conduct.

Challenges

Confronting officers and trying to get them to understand the impropriety of their behavior.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Ralph D. Pacy
Eastern District of Virginia

(Similar practices were submitted by N. Alan Weibel, Southern District of Texas; Héctor R. Torres-Quñones and José R. Lopez, District of Puerto Rico. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Fraternization Policy

Practice

We train all staff in the Code of Conduct as well as our own fraternization policy “to eliminate any potential conflict of interest or impairment of the supervision and rehabilitation of offenders provided by U.S. Probation Office’s employees.”

Rationale

The training lets employees know what is expected and what behaviors and associations to avoid.

Benefits

Employees report more questionable situations and ask for guidance from the supervisor.

Challenges

Some situations fall in gray areas. Dealing with officers who do not comply with policies is another challenge.

Resources

Time, for developing policies and for training.

Contact

JoAnn Coates
Eastern District of Wisconsin

Tickler Systems

Practice

We train officers to review and critique case plans during contact with offenders to ensure compliance. We also have officers create tickler systems to allow for follow-up, and we conduct scheduled and unscheduled reviews to ensure that case plans are implemented.

Rationale

To ensure compliance with court orders.

Benefits

Supervision issues are addressed promptly.

Challenges

Having officers follow through with reviews when their caseloads are heavy.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Bonita M. Wells
Eastern District of Virginia

(A similar practice was submitted by Furman Muzzal, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Plan Review

Practice

We regularly review initial case supervision plans and supervision progress reports. We discuss weak plans with the officers who prepared them.

Rationale

Lengthy written comments can be misinterpreted as allegations of incompetence and lead to unnecessary hard feelings, causing rifts between supervisors and officers. Face-to-face discussions promote dialog.

Benefits

Improved communications.

Challenges

Sometimes writing a short sentence telling the officer to do something is easier than going to the officer in a spirit of cooperation.

Resources

Time.

Contact

David L. Martin

Middle District of Florida

(Similar practices were submitted Anita Chavez, District of New Mexico, and Wilson Castle, Southern District of Alabama. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Verification

Practice

To improve the effectiveness of case supervision, officers must be encouraged to look beyond their initial assessment for what offenders would like to conceal from the probation department. We regularly review cases for verification goals such as personal contact with arresting police officers, visits to rental managers, verification of suspicious vehicle tag numbers, regular record checks of offenders and their associates, verification of travel proposals, and follow-up with law enforcement repeat offender units.

Rationale

Enhanced supervision requires that officers accurately assess third-party risk and the risk that offenders will “re-offend.” Officers must take reasonable care to address the risks so as not to be held liable for offenders’ actions.

Benefits

The primary benefit is obtaining accurate appraisals of offenders’ compliance and risk. Equally beneficial are the lessons officers learn from actions they take. Focus and decisiveness improve. Confidence and sense of purpose increase. Court reports are accurate, complete, and useful. Obtaining sound information also promotes teamwork and enhances officers’ esprit de corps. Communication between officers and management improves when officers take pride in their work.

Challenges

The primary challenge seems to be maintaining vigilance in the face of habit and human nature. Convenience, deadlines, and ego investment need to be supplanted with verification, communication, thorough interviews, field work, and discussions.

Resources

No additional money, time, or programs seem to be needed.

Contact

Arthur E. Riley
District of Maryland

Guidance and Feedback

Practice

In our district, the supervisor reviews initial case plans to determine officers' understanding of issues and problems to ensure that officers have gathered all information necessary to assess cases accurately and have developed effective strategies. In subsequent reviews of chronological records and revised case plans, the supervisor can see if officers followed the plan and supervisory directives. The supervisor can also identify impediments hampering officers' efforts to carry out plans, as well as evidence that plans had the desired results. If plans prove not to be viable, the supervisor makes further suggestions. In the review process, the SUSPO encourages dialogue with officers.

Rationale

To ensure that offenders are being supervised effectively and to ensure that officers comply with enhanced supervision and with Title 18 requirements.

Benefits

The officer and supervisor share responsibility for and commit to the supervision plan. The practice also ensures accountability in offender supervision.

Challenges

Getting officers to follow plans consistently and ensuring that officers read the supervisor's comments.

Resources

Effective case reviews and ongoing consultation with officers requires a lot of time. The supervisor acts as a resource person in reiterating the principles of enhanced supervision in the written reviews and consultation sessions. Also, officers are asked to use Monograph 109.

Contact

Claretha Nelson
District of the District of Columbia

New Evaluation Tool

Practice

Our district has developed an evaluation tool to measure critical tasks for timeliness, quality, and quantity in accordance with *Perform*, published by the Chief's Advisory Council and distributed to all districts.

Rationale

Our old evaluation tool did not provide meaningful information about measurable critical tasks.

Benefits

The tool provides more reliable information.

Challenges

Using the tool demands a considerable amount of the supervisor's time.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Tom Ogden
District of Utah

Attending Community Agency Staffings

Practice

The SUSPO in our district periodically attends staffings at community corrections centers (CCCs) and aftercare agencies.

Rationale

Sitting through CCC staffings enables the SUSPO to assess the services provided by CCCs and aftercare agencies. Assessing officers' interaction with the agencies is equally important. For example, being particularly attentive to a public law case in the CCC enhances an officer's relationship with CCC staff. The SUSPO will also know if an officer is lax in following up with an aftercare agency counselor and, if so, can take action.

Benefits

Again, assessing agency services is helpful, and the SUSPO knows how well officers work with other agencies.

Challenges

Going to staffings and going through case files takes time.

Resources

SUSPO's time.

Contact

Dan Broome
District of Arizona

Ensuring that Officers Understand Standards and Policies

Practice

We advise officers in our district of office standards and Administrative Office requirements and distribute samples of quality work to them. We also encourage officers to discuss tasks with the SUSPO frequently. Officers are scheduled for weekly appointments with the SUSPO. Cases are discussed in depth every three to six months. The SUSPO also accompanies officers in the field to observe the quality of their work and to ensure they are taking proper safety measures.

Rationale

To promote quality control by ensuring that officers are familiar with local office standards and Administrative Office policies.

Benefits

All officers have the opportunity to seek direction and clarify training matters informally and at regular weekly meetings with the SUSPO.

Challenges

Having to discuss all issues with the SUSPO increases the time it takes to complete tasks.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Charles T. Herman
Southern District of New York

(Similar practices were submitted by Dennis R. Smith, District of Minnesota; Bonita Wells and Ralph D. Pacy, Eastern District of Virginia; and Lewis Slay, Northern District of Mississippi. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

More Effective Field Supervision

Practice

Every month, the SUSPO reviews probation form 17s (travel records) and prepares a two- to three-page report for each probation officer, reviewing chronos in conjunction with the applicable form 17s, noting positive field contacts, and surveying key supervision issues addressed only during fieldwork.

Rationale

To improve officers' efficiency and effectiveness in the field.

Benefits

The report provides probation officers with useful feedback about their field contacts.

Challenges

Recognizing and acting on weaknesses in field supervision.

Resources

Approximately one hour for a complete report. This practice works best with a local area network enabling retrieval of chronos for each officer.

Contact

Terrence Sherbondy
District of Nevada

Including Offenders in Case Staffings

Practice

In our district, difficult offenders attend case staffings, along with the officer, the supervisor, and (when appropriate) a specialist.

Rationale

To support and assist the officer and to give the supervisor an opportunity to observe how officers deal with difficult cases.

Benefits

Encourages officers to seek help from the supervisor. Keeps the supervisor involved in officers' daily work. Creates a bond between the officer and the supervisor, building stronger working relationships.

Challenges

Gaining officers' confidence. Overcoming officers' reluctance to refer cases for staffings because of their feelings of vulnerability when the supervisor is present.

Resources

Thirty minutes to one hour per offender, depending on the issues addressed.

Contact

Bob Clepper
Northern District of Texas

Tracking Officer Work Patterns

Practice

We use a monthly officer review form to record officers' traditional and nontraditional time in the field and the number of case contacts they make. The SUSPO and the officer review the form and add comments as needed.

Rationale

The SUSPOs needed a means of evaluating performance continuously.

Benefits

Officers and SUSPOs can see at a glance how much time has been spent in the field in any given month and can see significant patterns, such as lack of home contacts in a group of case reviews. SUSPOs can comment on a particular aspect of the job or on the job as a whole, depending on the issues addressed. Monthly review also ensures that annual evaluations are more accurate.

Challenges

The review process is time consuming. Contacts are counted only to reveal trends. Taking the time to make the review worthwhile is important.

Resources

The review form, which upper management can also use to review SUSPO oversight of officers.

Contact

Dan Broome
District of Arizona

Accompanying Officers in the Field

Practice

The supervisor regularly accompanies officers in the field, acting as a partner.

Rationale

To enable the supervisor to understand problems that officers face.

Benefits

Awareness of problems that officers encounter in the field.

Challenges

Working fieldwork into the supervisor's schedule. Getting officers to be comfortable with the supervisor's presence.

Resources

Supervisor's time.

Contact

Teresa Acosta
Western District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Fred Wills, District of Maryland; Bill Cazalas, Southern District of Texas; JoAnn Coates, Eastern District of Wisconsin; Jaime Guerra, Eastern District of Arkansas; and Roger C. Ahrens, Central District of Illinois. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Reviewing the Case Plan Review

Practice

As SUSPO, I review copies of all applicable Supervisor's Case Plan Review forms when conducting six-month evaluations.

Rationale

To allow me to identify trends, problems, and strengths in officers' supervision practices.

Benefits

Reviewing the forms enables me to assess officers' supervision practices objectively, without relying on memory or being unduly influenced by the most recent positive or negative episode.

Challenges

Making copies of all the review forms for the SUSPO takes clerical staff time. The SUSPO must also set up a file for the forms for each officer.

Resources

Expenses are minimal. Some time and organizing are necessary.

Contact

Fred S. Tryles
Eastern District of Michigan

Offender Compliance Database

Practice

We have an offender compliance subdatabase of our office database system to record information from the semiannual status report, which is completed every six months along with the case plan. Reports can be generated by officer caseload, unit, and district, permitting assessment of offenders' compliance with financial sanctions, community service, and drug testing and of any new incidence of criminal conduct. The reports indicate percentages of compliance and show whether violations have been reported to the court. Reports listing individual cases that are not in compliance can be generated for follow-up by officers and supervisors.

Rationale

This system was an outgrowth of our district's participation in the Federal Judicial Center's supervision self-assessment program. During internal review, we found gathering information on noncompliance trends to be helpful.

Benefits

This program has provided a rich source of information for training, policy, and procedural development, as well as a means for quality assurance. Periodically sharing this information with all staff has improved our compliance rate.

Challenges

There was some initial reluctance to display outcome data throughout the office, but focusing on using the information for policy development and training and staff performance evaluations helped us gain staff support.

Resources

Developing the database required additional programming by the systems manager. The program also requires ongoing entry of semiannual status report data by clerks.

Contact

Todd Sanders
Western District of Washington

Statistical Evaluation of Home Confinement

Practice

Our district's home confinement program has built-in procedures to show outcomes. Supervision reports on all offenders completing the program are submitted to the court. An annual report submitted to the chief provides a statistical breakdown of the program, including violations and successful completions.

Rationale

The district needed a means of profiling accomplishments and identifying problems in its highly visible home confinement program, which provides the court with a sentencing alternative.

Benefits

Home confinement staff, probation office management, and the court have the information needed to show that the program is successful.

Challenges

Daily monitoring of the program leaves little time for preparing additional reports and completing the forms necessary for program research. Also, compiling data and preparing the annual report is time consuming.

Resources

Supervisor's and home confinement staff's time.

Contact

John Peet
Northern District of Ohio

Ensuring Follow-up

Practice

During case reviews, we evaluate the effectiveness of officers' supervision strategies and activities by determining the degree of offender compliance, the speed with which violations are detected, and the extent to which offenders' behavior improves. If results are positive, officers are encouraged to continue with their strategies. If strategies prove to be irrelevant or ineffective, cases are staffed for alternative strategies.

On the case review form the SUSPO tells the officer what course of action is needed to stabilize the case and what changes are needed to make the supervision plan more effective and to bring the case file up to office standards. The officer must make the recommended adjustments before the SUSPO approves the case plan. Information on the case review form is also documented in a case tracking binder, which is used to evaluate the officer's performance in following up supervisory directives and in using the SUSPO's feedback to develop viable case supervision plans.

Rationale

This practice is intended to improve case plans and subsequent outcomes and to ensure that officers follow up supervisory directives and adhere to the standards of enhanced supervision and the mandates of 18 U.S.C. § 3603. It is also intended to assist the SUSPO in evaluating officers' performance and in giving feedback.

Benefits

Officers are better focused, developing strategies and activities which will increase offender compliance, lead to earlier detection of violations, and produce better treatment results. Quality control of case files has also improved. The SUSPO is better able to measure how well officers follow supervisory directives.

Challenges

Changing officers' habits and overcoming the lingering effects of prior district policies. Getting officers to read and follow supervisory directives.

Resources

The case tracking binder. Time.

(continued on reverse)

Contact

Claretha G. Nelson

District of the District of Columbia

Quantifying Treatment Criteria

Practice

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist (DATS) in our district developed a Completion of Treatment form for supervising officers to use, to ensure that criteria for ending counseling is the same for all offenders. The DATS officer will review these forms until the officers become comfortable using them.

Rationale

Officers were depending on the treatment agencies to decide when offenders had completed treatment or were following the phase protocol without considering factors that might warrant keeping offenders in counseling beyond the one-year time frame.

Benefits

When the practice has been completely implemented, all officers will be using some quantitative criteria to determine treatment completion.

Challenges

Officers' resistance to change.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Rebecca Fulper
Eastern District of Arkansas

(A similar practice was submitted by John H. Stites, District of Iowa. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Defendant Exit Interviews

Practice

I randomly interview defendants who are pending Bureau of Prisons designation, asking them to describe their supervision experience, including supervision issues, electronic monitoring, urinalysis, home visits, and officer involvement. Defendants usually are very positive about the pretrial services officers and have no reason to hold back.

Rationale

I use the information I get in exit interviews to gain insight into our district's relationship with defendants.

Benefits

Staff are aware that I use these interviews to help them learn about themselves. It is refreshing to get the defendants' perspective.

Challenges

None.

Resources

Ten-minute interviews three to four times a month.

Contact

N. Alan Weibel
Southern District of Texas

Consultation

Issues Forum

Practice

The supervision unit in our district holds an issues forum every other Friday morning to discuss casework strategies, problems, new policies, and procedures, and other topics relevant to offender supervision.

Rationale

There was no formal vehicle which officers and management staff could use to regularly discuss important supervision matters.

Benefits

Officers gain a better understanding of the rationale behind procedural changes, receive valuable feedback from colleagues on how to handle difficult cases, and come up with innovative casework strategies.

Challenges

The forum takes significant time to plan and implement and requires officers to take time away from their heavy workloads. Care must be taken to keep fresh topics directly related to casework improvement on the agenda.

Resources

Two and a half hours every other Friday for meetings. Three hours per meeting for the SUSPO to prepare.

Contact

John H. Stites
Southern District of Iowa

“Group Therapy” Sessions

Practice

We have consultation meetings, or “group therapy sessions,” to handle disruptive conflicts between individuals. At the meetings, individuals present their viewpoints, and team members offer feedback.

Rationale

Clearing up conflicts before they cause serious damage improves team performance.

Benefits

The meetings generate diverse solutions, establish a commitment from each person to solve problems, limit rumors, and build a stronger team.

Challenges

Overcoming individuals’ resistance to suggestions and their tendency to take team members’ observations personally. Ensuring that team members are objective and nonjudgmental. Keeping individuals and team members focused on the topic. Handling emotional reactions.

Resources

Time, for the sessions. Training for supervisors and employees in conflict resolution, managing difficult people, and communication.

Contact

Barbara M. Ortiz
Southern District of Florida

Individual Consultation

Practice

We maintain an open-door policy in our district whereby officers can seek assistance and intervention as issues arise. At least once per week the SUSPO meets with each officer in his or her office to get a sense of how the officer is coping with caseload demands. We also use e-mail so officers get the information they need as quickly as possible.

Rationale

Good communication promotes efficiency.

Benefits

Meeting with the SUSPO in their offices gives officers the sense that the SUSPO is interested in their progress. Officers can take comfort in the fact that the SUSPO is available when needed. Issues are resolved before they become problems.

Challenges

Given the SUSPO's responsibilities, availability is sometimes a problem.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Cheryl Holmes
Southern District of New York

(A similar practice was submitted by Charles L. Currier, Eastern District of Missouri. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Officer Questionnaire

Practice

Each year the SUSPO gives officers a questionnaire (usually containing four questions) about the officers' working relationship with the SUSPO.

Rationale

The officers know best what motivational tools work on them. The questionnaire allows officers to share this knowledge with the SUSPO.

Benefits

The questionnaire constitutes a contract between the supervisor and the officer for improving performance. Moreover, it empowers the officer to take part in choosing performance incentives.

Challenges

The SUSPO exposes himself or herself to potentially unflattering feedback. The SUSPO must concentrate on the message rather than the messenger, or the messenger's style of delivery.

Resources

This activity is time consuming because it often prompts long discussions about many issues.

Contact

Duane L. Lumpkin
Southern District of Ohio

(Similar practices were submitted by Joe Royston, Northern District of Illinois, and Bill Cazalas, Southern District of Texas. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Making Full Use of Options

Practice

We use unit meetings (with roundtable discussions), e-mail, memos, specialized training (FJC and local), in-house experts, mentors, and case staffings to maximize communication with officers.

Rationale

Everyone prefers a positive approach to discussing ways to improve his or her work, including having the supervisor seek the employee's expertise and opinion.

Benefits

Giving officers timely feedback ensures prompt action and positive results.

Challenges

Getting all officers to respond has been challenging. Some officers desire little contact with management. Making officers feel they are part of the team and an integral part of the process takes time.

Resources

Training programs such as the FJC's Frontline Leadership are valuable.

Contact

David G. Bazán
Southern District of Texas

Including Line Staff in Management Meetings

Practice

We hold monthly operations meetings in the chief's office. In addition to the deputy chief and supervisor, two members from the line staff attend on a rotating basis, with each person attending two meetings in a row. The agenda is provided in advance, and the minutes of the meeting are posted the next day on the computer network so that the information is accessible to all staff.

Rationale

These monthly operations meetings enable all officers and clerical support staff to participate in the larger issues of the office.

Benefits

Line staff have input in daily office operation. Airing their opinions in an open forum has enhanced communication between management and line staff. Staff have learned the elements of a successful meeting.

Challenges

Meetings generally last more than two hours. Staff are expected to come prepared and to be able to discuss the agenda items. Often follow-up from staff is needed at the next meeting and must be conveyed by a staff member who did not attend the previous meeting. The staff representatives often must meet with their team before the operations meeting so that they can more accurately represent the staff's needs and desires.

Resources

(None given.)

Contact

Robert L. Fowler
Northern District of Illinois

(A similar practice was submitted by James L. Langston, District of Nevada. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

All-Staff Meetings

Practice

I schedule staff meetings as needed. Officers, specialists, and clerical staff, including the supervisory clerk, all attend the meetings.

Rationale

After becoming supervisor, I felt that including the entire staff in staff meetings would increase morale, encouraging each staff member to recognize the importance of his or her position.

Benefits

I think communication as a whole has improved quite a bit. Clerks are made aware of changes in procedure as soon as officers are, and all questions about the changes can be answered at the meeting.

Challenges

Initially, it was difficult to get all staff members to attend the meetings because of absences due to annual or sick leave. However, when brought together, they were amazed at how well the meeting went.

Resources

One to one and a half hours or more for each meeting, depending on the number of questions or problems needing resolution.

Contact

John P. Ballman
Western District of Texas

(Similar practices were submitted by Thomas M. Collins, District of Nevada; Rick Lenhart, Southern District of Ohio; Paul Visokay, District of Connecticut; JoAnn Coates, Eastern District of Wisconsin; Manuel Alonzo, Southern District of California; Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan; Leonel R. Garza, Southern District of Texas; Hal Langenbahn and David J. Nebergall, Central District of Illinois; Dalia Villalapando, Southern District of Texas; Héctor R. Torres-Quñones, District of Puerto Rico; and G. Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Semiannual Officer “Report Card”

Practice

In our district, the supervisors use semiannual “report cards” or “score sheets” to provide officers in their units with written summaries of their performance. Informal follow-up meetings are scheduled, if necessary.

Rationale

Although officers receive continuous feedback from the supervisors, they like to have a formal summary of their progress in achieving goals and objectives. The report card motivates them.

Benefits

Officers know where they stand before the annual review. The report card allows supervisors and officers to contract for alternative improvement strategies. An evaluation process that is less formal than annual review promotes dialogue for change.

Challenges

This practice forces both the supervisor and the officer to be accountable for goals set at the annual evaluation conference.

Resources

Reviewing each officer’s work every six months is time consuming for the supervisor.

Contact

Duane L. Lumpkin
Southern District of Ohio

(A similar practice was submitted by W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia. You may want to contact this district for additional information.)

Preparing Confined Defendant Lists

Practice

Each week, every pretrial services officer prepares a list of confined defendants on his or her caseload. The list contains the defendant's name, the custody date, the magistrate judge's name, and the reason for confinement.

Rationale

Preparing the confined defendant list each week reminds the officer of who is in custody and why, prompting the officer to consider appropriate alternatives to confinement.

Benefits

The supervisor is able to monitor officers' efforts to assist defendants in securing release. If it appears an officer has not considered alternatives to confinement, the supervisor can discuss the situation with the officer and offer advice. Because the officer is thus proactive in seeking alternatives to detention under the least restrictive conditions, the detention rate has decreased.

Challenges

Initially, officers resisted doing the extra paperwork. Frequently, the lists were not submitted or were photocopied from week to week. To encourage compliance with the practice, officers were provided all information on detention and supervision matters in the district, thus showing them the "big picture" and encouraging them to make informed decisions.

Resources

This practice requires no additional programming or funding. Officers indicate that preparing the list takes about 15 minutes each week.

Contact

Cindy Bochantin
Eastern District of Missouri

Strategic Planning

Practice

Our district developed a strategic plan that includes vision and mission statements. Work teams develop goals that are distributed to staff and create action plans to achieve the goals.

Rationale

To work toward common goals.

Benefits

A common purpose evolved.

Challenges

Changing paradigms so employees collectively work to serve the organization's mission.

Resources

Training time, consultant fees.

Contact

Thomas J. McGlynn
Western District of New York

Group Fieldwork

Practice

We encourage various forms of group fieldwork. Officers go into the community in groups of as many as six. The SUSPO and CUSPO participate in these team field trips at various times.

Rationale

The original reason for doing fieldwork in groups was safety, but we discovered that the conversations officers had about cases and supervision issues on the field trips, many of which take place at night, fostered a shared sense of purpose. The result was some very valuable “quality time.” Officers discuss the importance of fieldwork and the reasons for supervision itself. It is not unusual for the SUSPO and, occasionally, the CUSPO to take part in these dialogues, so the managers’ perspectives are included as well.

Benefits

Unexpectedly, group fieldwork has become an important medium for exchanging ideas about supervision. It also serves to increase the partnership that we feel as a group of officers supervising offenders.

Challenges

Group fieldwork tends to bring case contacts and mileage down, as many officers are focused on limited numbers of offenders and destinations per trip.

Resources

Staff time (the most precious resource of all).

Contact

Alvin Ho
District of Hawaii

Co-managing Staff

Practice

In three offices in our district, two partner SUSPOs co-manage USPO staff.

Rationale

To promote and maintain consistent management approaches between SUSPOs.

Benefits

Staff perspectives have broadened. Communication between SUSPOs has improved. Parochialism of individual SUSPOs and units has been eliminated.

Challenges

Co-managing units demands constant communication between SUSPOs and careful division of management labor. Initially, staff balked at using both SUSPOs as resources.

Resources

Routing and work flow must be restructured.

Contact

Will O'Sullivan
Beverly Brook
Northern District of California

Weekly Conference Calls

Practice

To counter the effects of isolation in our district, which has multiple branch offices, staff are brought together through a conference call every Monday morning. The supervisor coordinates the call, which usually takes 20 minutes to an hour. Senior officers (the drug and alcohol treatment specialist, electronic monitoring specialist, etc.), and supervisors provide updates in their areas, and the CUSPO shares information relevant to the district. Officers can use the call to staff difficult cases or situations. The investigation supervisor frequently uses the call to discuss “homework assignments” related to sentencing guidelines. The keys to success are conducting the calls regularly, sticking to business rather than “shooting the bull,” and making sure all officers participate.

Rationale

Estrangement and isolation of staff in branch offices is not unusual. Quite often staff develop territorial attitudes and feel that they are “the only soldiers on the line.”

Benefits

Regular conference calls remind staff that they are all partners in the district’s purpose. The calls also allow consistent dissemination of information.

Challenges

The call must be worth the time it takes, since nothing loses people’s interest faster than having their time wasted. Involving quiet, nonassertive officers can be challenging; it is sometimes easy for staff to sit quietly during the call and allow themselves to be entertained.

Resources

This practice requires a good telephone system and a budget for long-distance calls. Initiating the call in a conference room enables staff to interact more readily; however, it is acceptable for officers at the head office to use their own telephones.

Contact

Steven Cole
District of Idaho

(A similar practice was submitted by Cheryl Gloe, District of Wyoming, and Michael Chatman, Middle District of Florida. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Managers' Meeting Follow-up with Staff

Practice

Managers in our district meet at least once every other month. Immediately after this manager's meeting, they meet with their own staffs. Managers also use cc-mail to share information with their staffs.

Rationale

To keep staff informed about what is happening in the district. To open up communication among staff and encourage sharing of concerns, problems, and possible solutions.

Benefits

All staff are kept up to date and made to feel that they are important members of the team.

Challenges

Some individuals' negative attitudes tend to rub off on other officers. Resistance to change is a constant problem.

Resources

Time.

Contact

J. Ray Young
Northern District of Florida

(Similar practices were submitted by Elizabeth Burala, District of Arizona; N. Alan Weibel, Southern District of Texas; JoAnn Coates, Eastern District of Wisconsin; Larry England, Southern District of Ohio; Jim Slaten, Middle District of Tennessee; and W.E. Cottrell, Eastern District of Virginia. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Shared Responsibility

Practice

In our district, newly hired supervision officers are closely supervised and taught that *everyone* shares responsibility for a case's success or failure. At the same time, we allow veteran officers freedom to be creative in supervising cases. Management is always ready to staff cases and to support officers' decisions.

Rationale

Emphasizing shared responsibility encourages both supervisors' and officers' dedication and commitment to work and to improving offenders' lives.

Benefits

This practice fosters clear statement of the district's goals and mission, promotes teamwork, and maximizes officers' and supervisor's talents.

Challenges

Reconciling officers' diverse philosophies and work ethics to the concept of shared responsibility.

Resources

This practice requires both supervisor's and officers' ongoing commitment.

Contact

Toya B. Bruss
Northern District of Mississippi

(Similar practices were submitted by Ronald E. Kline, Western District of Missouri, and G. Kenneth Coale, Southern District of Alabama. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Including Officers in the Decision-making Process

Practice

Officers in our district help create as well as implement new procedures. We also make sure officers are informed of new developments.

Rationale

Officers who have an investment in procedures will be more willing to follow procedures; they will feel that they are “in on things.”

Benefits

Increased morale.

Challenges

None.

Resources

Officers’ and supervisor’s time.

Contact

Lucile H. Battle
Eastern District of Michigan

Daily Personal Contact

Practice

Supervisors in our district initiate personal contact each morning with individual probation officers in their units, reviewing proposed activities and priorities. A general staff meeting as well as individual unit meetings are held every month.

Rationale

By speaking with officers each day, supervisors show that they are involved in operations and concerned with the quality of officers' work. Supervisors also can tell if any training or adjustment is needed to improve or maintain that quality.

Benefits

Officers and supervisors have better rapport, and teamwork is enhanced.

Challenges

Officers may feel that supervisors are "looking over their shoulders." Supervisors must take care to make clear that they want only to promote the highest quality of supervision and investigation and that they want officers to be successful.

Resources

One-on-one contacts take 10 to 15 minutes daily. The monthly unit meeting and general staff meetings take two hours per month.

Contact

James L. Langston
District of Nevada

Cross-functional Management Meetings

Practice

We hold monthly supervision management meetings which include the deputy chief, all supervisors, team leaders, and supervising probation clerks. Attendees discuss pertinent issues and review procedures. Supervisors share the results with line staff at monthly team meetings.

Rationale

A team approach to operations was implemented in response to bifurcation, with authority to lead teams delegated to supervisors.

Benefits

Managers feel that they have a say in operations. Everyone agrees on goals and objectives. Anyone with new ideas can present them for discussion.

Challenges

The main problems are getting managers to accept the team concept and to become more creative.

Resources

Time.

Contact

Bernard Ray
Southern District of New York

(Similar practices were submitted by Frank G. Swoope, Eastern District of Virginia, and Cleatrice C. McTorry, Middle District of Tennessee. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Weekly Management Meetings

Practice

In our district the chief and two supervisors meet at the same time every week.

Rationale

Weekly management meetings enhance communication and ensure that all supervisors review officers' work, reports, Initial Case Supervision Plans, etc. according to the same standards.

Benefits

This practice is expected to result in better communication and early identification of operational issues.

Challenges

None.

Resources

Approximately one hour each week.

Contact

Barbara JK Skidmore
District of Maryland

(Similar practices were submitted by Richard Galmarini, Western District of New York, and Elizabeth M. Burdles and Mike Carrion, District of Arizona. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Flagging Safety Risks

Practice

The supervisor and supervision officer in our district call attention to significant safety risks by placing a red page describing the situation at the top left of the case file. Example: “The offender has a vicious dog. Caution should be exercised during home contacts.”

Rationale

With frequent case transfers, safety issues are sometimes lost.

Benefits

A safer work environment.

Challenges

Using this practice to excess defeats its purpose.

Resources

Time, for preparing the form and for consultation between the officer and supervisor.

Contact

Peter Hoose
Northern District of Ohio

Sharing Information at District-wide Meetings

Practice

The SUSPOs in our district hold monthly district-wide supervision unit meetings at which officers share supervision practices and information about community resources.

Rationale

SUSPOs found that individual officers had developed supervision techniques or resources unknown to others. The district-wide meeting enables officers to share knowledge.

Benefits

Officers learn from each other and see that management values their input.

Challenges

Getting officers to understand that they possess unique knowledge. Keeping newer officers from being intimidated by tenured officers' experience.

Resources

Officers need minimal time to prepare for the practice-sharing segment of the meeting, which usually lasts 10 to 15 minutes.

Contact

Roger St. George
District of Minnesota

(Similar practices were submitted by Ronald D. Pacy, Eastern District of Virginia; Wesley A. Martin, District of Nevada; N. Alan Weibel, Southern District of Texas; Charles L. Currier, Eastern District of Missouri; Olivia V. Meza, District of Arizona; Lucile H. Battle, Eastern District of Michigan; and Pete Hoose, Northern District of Ohio. You may want to contact these districts for additional information.)

Networking with Other Districts

Practice

We network with other districts during Federal Judicial Center or Administrative Office training. We also maintain contact with former co-workers now serving in other districts and participate in court training sessions and meetings.

Rationale

We recognize the need for external input to rejuvenate our ideas.

Benefits

Creation of effective procedures or improvement of existing ones.

Challenges

Arranging travel.

Resources

Training sessions in Puerto Rico or the United States. Expenses related to telephoning and faxing.

Contact

Héctor R. Torres-Quñones
District of Puerto Rico

Making Assignments on the Office Computer Network

Practice

The supervisors in our office use the interoffice computer network to make assignments. We have set up a table listing the officers' names at the top. We are able to see assignments instantly when they come in, review assignments for the past few months, and make decisions about assigning new work accordingly.

Rationale

With two supervisors making assignments, we needed a way to make sure that cases were assigned fairly.

Benefits

Either supervisor can enter an assignment, immediately updating the assignment list. Anyone in the office can see how and to whom work has been assigned. This procedure reduces questions about fairness.

Challenges

Finding a format that was easy to read and work with.

Resources

Computers in the office must be networked. Any simple table will work; time spent designing the chart was minimal.

Contact

Susan Rodolf
Western District of Texas

Accessing the Circuit Bulletin Board

Practice

We periodically review significant circuit and district cases on the circuit bulletin board. We send other SUSPOs memoranda about significant decisions which affect management, revocation issues, and presentence reports.

Rationale

Sharing of information within the district was not coordinated. Officers needed to be kept informed about circuit opinions.

Benefits

By coordinating their efforts, SUSPOs are able to disseminate information more quickly.

Challenges

All cases must be reviewed for significance. Reviewing cases daily can be difficult in view of the other demands on the SUSPOs' time.

Resources

One hour per day to download and review the bulletin board. Cost of the software (Procomm) and of long-distance phone calls.

Contact

Candace Story
Northern District of Texas

Communication Between PSR and Supervision Officers

Practice

As they write presentence reports, PSR officers must communicate with the officers in the supervision unit. PSR and supervision officers must also discuss appropriate recommendations of conditions of supervised release or probation before sentencing.

Rationale

To identify appropriate conditions of supervised release or probation before supervision commences.

Benefits

This practice helps prevent the court from setting unnecessary conditions. Supervision officers do not have to file form 12B with the court to request additional conditions or modifications. As well as enabling officers to immediately identify appropriate conditions of supervision, this practice permits them to promptly address any problems and establish supervision strategies.

Challenges

Encouraging unit members to interact with each other.

Resources

A small amount of time for communication.

Contact

Hal Langenbahn
Central District of Illinois

Discharge Consultations

Practice

A copy of every violation report is circulated among all SUSPOs in our district. Early discharge recommendations require support of a majority of SUSPOs. Two SUSPOs staff recommendations with POs. Every two weeks the DCUSPO and SUSPOs meet and discuss case management practices, if necessary.

Rationale

To promote consistency among units.

Benefits

Work is more consistent, and bringing several minds to bear on an issue promotes creativity.

Challenges

None.

Resources

SUSPOs' time.

Contact

Pat Doherty
Eastern District of Missouri

Appendixes

A: Categories and Issues

B: Instructions Sent to All Districts for
Submitting Effective Practices

C: *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors*
Symposium Participants

Appendix A: Categories and Issues

Individual Staff and Team Development

- How do you train officers to recognize, prioritize and develop appropriate supervision strategies?
- How do you ensure that the district's vision of case management is understood, implemented and reconciled with the officer's personal vision?
- How do you assess and improve the officer's interaction with system stakeholders?
- How do you develop, improve, and maximize skills and talents of individual officers as well as teams?
- What steps do you take to ensure sensitivity to diversity issues?
- How do you ensure the officer's proper exercise of discretion and independent judgment?
- How do you assess officers' stressors and help them manage or relieve that stress?
- How do you assist and encourage officers to develop resources within the community?

Case File Audits

- What techniques or processes have you developed to perform meaningful and timely case file audits to ensure the legitimacy of supervision activities?

Quality Assurance

- How do you guide officers to determine appropriate supervision levels and to independently assess serious needs or issues of defendants/offenders?
- How do you ensure officers are acting with integrity and in accordance with the Code of Conduct and office policies?
- What actions do you take to determine that officers continually evaluate the viability of the case plans and take appropriate action where necessary?
- How do you qualitatively assess the officer's supervision practices?
- How do you measure outcomes?

Consultation

- What tools, processes or activities do you use to ensure appropriate and timely feedback and dialogue with the officers?

- How do you communicate and maintain a partnership of purpose?
- In what ways do you consult with each other and other units to share effective case management practices?

Appendix B: Instructions Sent to All Districts for Submitting Effective Practices

Please read the following instructions carefully and submit your responses accordingly.

Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors will be a publication primarily for supervisors of supervision officers. It will be divided into four categories: Staff and Team Development, Case File Audits, Quality Assurance, and Consultation. For each category, we have posed specific questions that address challenging issues that supervisors must deal with effectively, efficiently, and oftentimes creatively and compassionately.

We are asking you to contribute to this effort by sharing information about practices, strategies, programs, or procedures that meet your established criteria and have assisted you in meeting the demands of your role as supervisor.

This packet includes the criteria and standards a practice must meet for publication; sample practices; forms for each issue; and a list of categories and forms.

Note that we do not expect everyone to have an answer to every issue!

We suggest that you

- read through the categories and the issues for each category;
- review the enclosed samples that illustrate the range of possible responses;
- select one or more issues that you believe you can answer in accordance with the established criteria;
- use the enclosed form for that issue (make as many copies of each as needed for your office);
- limit your response to one page (if selected for publication your name and number will be included so that those who need additional information can contact you); and
- return your completed forms to your chief at a mutually agreed upon date.

Thank you for taking part in this important and exciting project. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Kate Lynott, Federal Judicial Center, (202) 273-4115 or any member of the planning committee. They are: Art Inouye, SUSPO, California Eastern; Terry Acosta, SUSPSO, Texas Western; Vicki Padgett, SUSPO, Florida Middle; Jim Lyons, DCUSPO, Florida Southern; and Jim Provence, CUSPO, Kentucky Eastern.

The deadline for submitting your proposed effective practices is May 8, 1996.

Appendix C: *Effective Practices: Case Management for Supervisors* Symposium Participants

Anita Lopez
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
District of New Mexico

Bonna Bellinger
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
District of Utah

William Cazales
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Southern District of Texas

Greg Johnson
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Northern District of Oklahoma

Gary Howard
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
District of Kansas

Joy Taylor
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Western District of Oklahoma

Joe Royston
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Northern District of Illinois

Colleen Sears
Supervisor
U.S. Pretrial Services Office
Southern District of Ohio

Darby Peterson
Deputy Chief
U.S. Probation Office
Northern District of Georgia

Randy Biehl
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Western District of New York

Peter Hoose
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Northern District of Ohio

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Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
District of South Carolina

Duane Lumpkin
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Southern District of Ohio

Michalah Bracken
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
Southern District of New York

Michael Ochoa
Supervisor
U.S. Probation Office
District of Colorado

William VanScoy
Operations Branch
Federal Corrections & Supervision Division
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

The Federal Judicial Center

Board

The Chief Justice of the United States, *Chair*

Judge Pasco M. Bowman II, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit

Judge Bruce M. Selya, U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Chief Judge Marvin E. Aspen, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Judge Thomas F. Hogan, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia

Chief Judge Richard P. Matsch, U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado

Chief Judge A. Thomas Small, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina

Magistrate Judge Virginia M. Morgan, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan

Leonidas Ralph Mecham, Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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